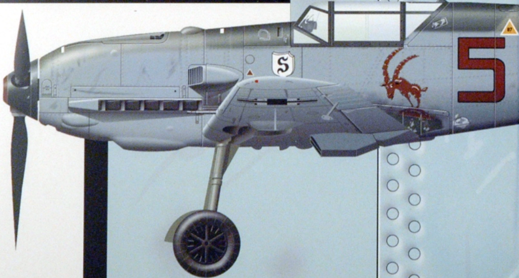
LUFTWAFFE COLOURS
Volume One Section 4

CLASSIC COLOURS

JAGDWAFFE

Eric Mombeek
With J.Richard Smith
& Eddie J.Creek

ATTACK IN THE WEST
May 1940



CLASSIC
PUBLICATIONS

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Publishers Note

The study of Luftwaffe camouflage and markings is a complex subject, compounded by the general lack of quality colour photographs. Inevitably therefore, most photographs appearing in this series are black and white and both the authors and publishers have offered their own interpretation of the colours they represent. We recognise that readers may have contrary opinions. Throughout Classic Colours, we have endeavoured to include as many unpublished photos and as much associated information as possible. Included are many variations of personal emblems and unit badges. In many instances these have been produced in colour to the best of the publisher's, authors' and artist's interpretations. Furthermore it should be stressed that the personal accounts contained in this series are as they have been related to the authors and are the product of the individual pilot's personal memories.

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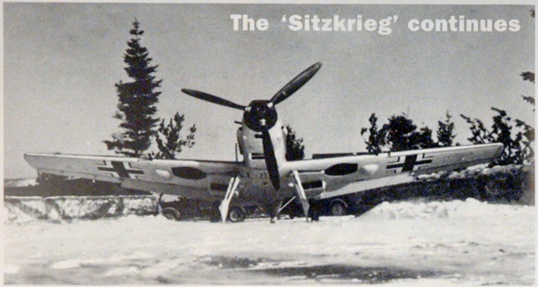
1940
ATTACK IN THE WEST

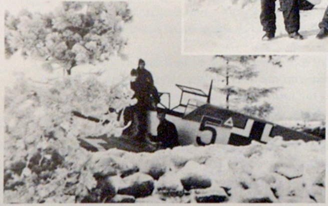
NARVIK
ROTTERDAM
BELGIUM
FRANCE

> *"An offensive will be planned on the northern flank of the Western Front through Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland. This offensive must be launched at the earliest possible moment and in the greatest possible strength.*
>
> *"The purpose of this offensive will be to defeat as much of the French Army and the forces of the Allies fighting by their side, and at the same time to win as much territory as possible in Holland, Belgium and northern France to serve as a base for the successful prosecution of the air and sea war against England and as a wide protective area for the economically vital Ruhr."*
>
> *Hitler's Directive No.6 for the Conduct of War*
> *9 October 1939*

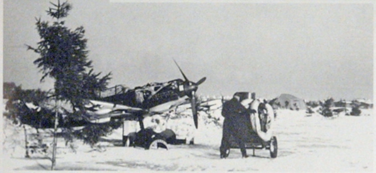
The 'Sitzkrieg' continues



ABOVE AND RIGHT: Bf 109 E-3s of II.(J)/Trägergruppe 186 at Nordholz early in 1940. After taking part in the invasion of Poland the fighter component of Trägergruppe 186 was expanded from Staffel to Gruppe strength during the middle of September 1939. The unit was led by Hptm. Heinrich Seeliger with Hptm. Werner Restemeyer, Oblt. Gerhard Kadow and Oblt. Hans-Herbert Wulff as Staffelkapitäne.

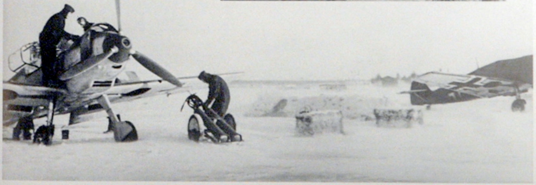


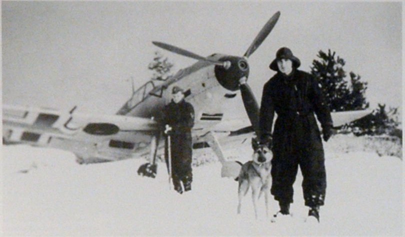
LEFT: Mechanics from II.(J)/Trägergruppe 186 endeavour to carry out maintenance on a Bf 109 E-3 at Nordholz in early 1940. This aircraft still has the large upper wing Balkenkreuz and is coded 'Black 5' outlined in yellow indicating it belonged to the 6. Staffel. All the aircraft appear to be fairly new as there is little sign of staining even around the engine exhausts.



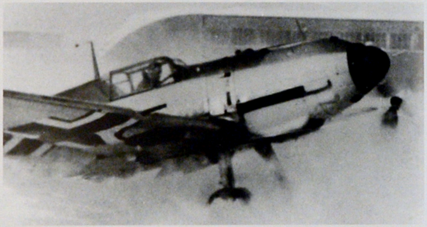
ABOVE AND LEFT: Taken at Nordholz on the German Bight at the beginning of 1940, these two photos show a mixture of Bf 109 E-1s and E-3s of II.(J)/Trägergruppe 186 being serviced. The above photo and the aircraft in the foreground left, show Bf 109 E-3s still painted in the splinter pattern of black-green (RLM 70) and dark green (RLM 71) with light-blue (RLM 65 underneath) carrying the new style Balkenkreuz with the increased white angles. Starting engines in cold weather was always a problem and here a mechanic is shown preparing a mobile petrol heater. Used just prior to starting the aircraft's engine the heater was connected using a cover and flexible trunking through which hot air was blown over the engine.

RIGHT AND BELOW: A Bf 109 E-1 of II.(J)/Trägergruppe 186 is being serviced at Nordholz in January 1940. Part of a chevron is just visible and the aircraft is painted on the uppersurfaces in a splinter pattern of RLM grey (RLM 02) and dark green (RLM 71) with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. This unit had been formed with the intention of operating the Bf 109 from the aircraft carrier 'Graf Zeppelin' which had been launched at Kiel-Holtenau on 8 December 1938 but was never completed for service. A special version of the Messerschmitt fighter was developed for carrier-born operations designated Bf 109 T. These aircraft were later stationed in Norway as part of JG 77, and also used by JG 11 and Jagdstaffel Helgoland. Note the large Balkenkreuz on the underside of the wing on the Bf 109 E-1 below in the background, with its fuselage covered for protection from the weather.

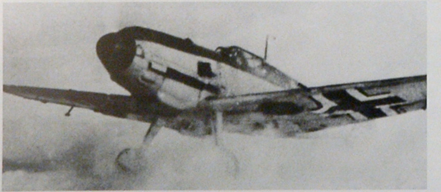


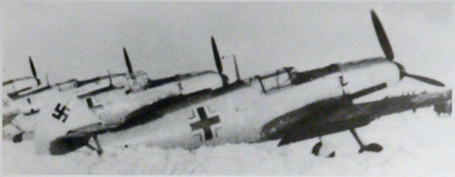


LEFT: II.(J)/Tr. Gr. 186 at the beginning of 1940. This and the Bf 109 E-3s shown below still carry the October 1939 large style crosses under the wings although by the beginning of 1940 a further variation had been introduced (see Luftwaffe Colours, Volume One Section 3 page 276 for details).

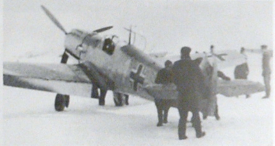


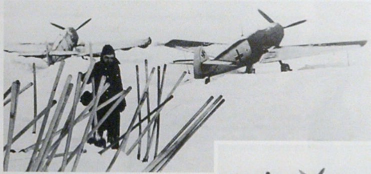
RIGHT AND BELOW: After operating for a short time in the invasion of Poland, I./JG 20 moved to Döberitz for the defence of the city of Berlin. This aircraft, 'Yellow 1' which was probably piloted by the Staffelkapitän of 9./JG 51, Hptm. Arnold Lignitz, was photographed on 22 February 1940. A few weeks before, this unit had been formed from 3./JG 20. Lignitz was awarded the Ritterkreuz on 5 November 1940 as Kommandeur of III./JG 54.



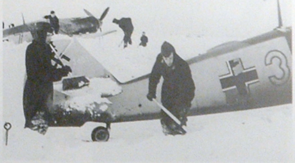


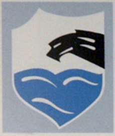
ABOVE AND RIGHT: Bf 109 Es of 3./JG 20 in heavy snow at Berlin-Döberitz on 22 February 1940. I./JG 20 under Hptm. Hannes Trautloft had been redesignated III./JG 51 on 22 September 1939. In the line-up above, the first aircraft is 'Yellow 4' with 'Yellow 2' behind it. They have the new style fuselage Balkenkreuz but retain the old position for the Hakenkreuz across the fin and rudder. 'Yellow 1' depicted on the photo to the right also has the new style Balkenkreuz and old style Hakenkreuz. The aircraft are finished in a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath.



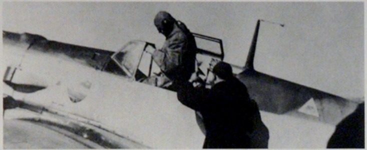


ABOVE AND RIGHT: During January and February, 1940 it was a major task for the ground crews of units stationed around the North Sea coastline to keep their aircraft in constant combat readiness. These Bf 109 Es from an unidentified unit still carry the old style national markings and are finished in the same camouflage colours as those of JG 20 above. The interesting feature on these aircraft are the individual markings. The Bf 109 E above carries a double chevron which is painted in white outline only leaving the centres in light-blue (RLM 65), the same as the fuselage. The nearest aircraft, on the right, carries the individual numbers '3' (W.Nr. 3401 in white on the fin) with '7' behind it. The numbers are painted in yellow outline only, approximately the same width as the white lines on the Balkenkreuz, and this in turn is also outlined with a thin black line leaving the centre area in the light-blue (RLM 65) fuselage colour.

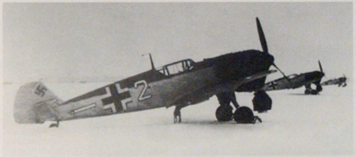




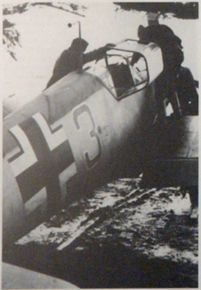
'Seeadler' badge of II./JG 77, early 1940



ABOVE: The new Kommandeur of II./JG 77, Major Harry von Bülow-Bothkamp, clambers into the cockpit of his Bf 109 E-3 at Jever on the German Bight at the beginning of 1940. The aircraft is camouflaged in splinter pattern on the uppersurfaces comprising dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. By this time the old seagull emblem of II/./JG 77 had been replaced by an eagle's head flying over the sea.

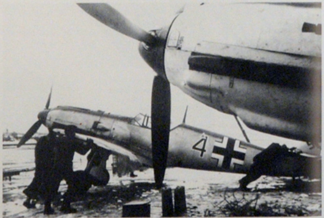


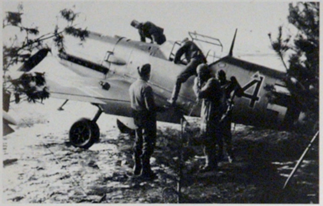
LEFT: These Bf 109 E-3s of 4./JG 2 were fitted with the modified 'flat top' canopy. This Staffel, which was formed at Zerbst on 15 December 1939 under Oblt. 'Assi' Hahn, was photographed in January 1940. All three aircraft shown have their engines covered as protection from the snow and freezing weather. The nearest aircraft is 'White 2' with the next one along being 'White 6'. The aircraft carry the white horizontal bar of the Second Gruppe and are camouflaged in the splinter pattern on the upper surfaces of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. Note that the JG 2 'Richthofen' badge was not applied to this side of the fuselage at this time.



LEFT: A Bf 109 E-3, coded 'Red 3' of 2./JG 3 being prepared for a flight at the beginning of 1940. Study of the various photographs reveals that the line of the uppersurface camouflage and the precise position of the fuselage cross varied from one aircraft to another.

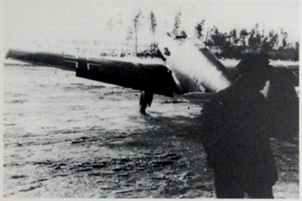
BELOW: Mechanics push a Bf 109 E-3 'Black 4' through the melting snow into a maintenance area for a pre-flight service.





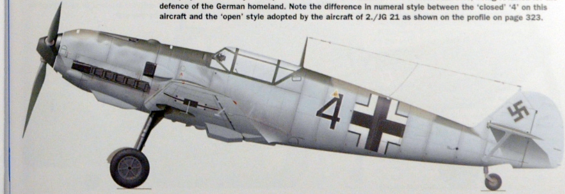
LEFT: Mechanics of 2./JG 3 based in the Bonn area prepare this Bf 109 E-3, coded 'Black 4' for a mission in the west at the beginning of 1940. An interesting feature on this aircraft is the number '4' painted around the '87 octane triangle' (marking the fuel filler position). This aircraft was painted in similar colours to the Bf 109 Es described opposite and again no unit identity emblems had been applied at this time. The aircraft is camouflaged in the splinter pattern on the uppersurfaces of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath.

BELOW: Mechanics help the pilot of 'Black 4' with his harness and parachute. Note that the pilot has oxygen equipment - quite unusual for this period. I./JG 3 was originally formed at Zerbst in July 1938 as II./JG 137, becoming II./JG 231 in November 1938 and receiving its final designation in May 1939.

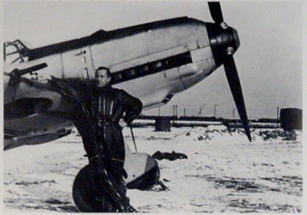


ABOVE: A rear view of Bf 109 E-1 'Black 4' with the engine running ready for take-off.

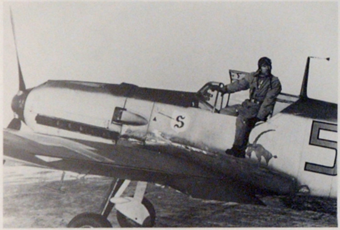
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 2./JG 3, Bonn area, early 1940
JG 3 played a relatively small part in the Invasion of France and the Low Countries, being retained for the defence of the German homeland. Note the difference in numeral style between the 'closed' '4' on this aircraft and the 'open' style adopted by the aircraft of 2./JG 21 as shown on the profile on page 323.

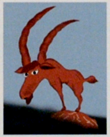


RIGHT: Photographed on 9 January 1940 at Werl, Uffz. Ernst Nischik leans on the wing of his Bf 109 E-3 belonging to 6./JG 26. Note the wing-mounted 20 mm MG FF cannon is covered over for weather protection. This aircraft carried a yellow (probably RLM 04) spinner tip and besides the JG 26 'Schlageter' emblem it probably also featured the 'Steinbock' (Ram) badge of the 6. Staffel below the cockpit. At this time the aircraft of this Staffel were camouflaged in a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath.



BELOW: Uffz. Ernst Nischik of 6./JG 26 poses in the cockpit of his Bf 109 E-3 'Brown 5' in early 1940. The camouflage colours were similar to those on the aircraft above. The 'Steinbock' emblem of the Staffel has often been depicted as being painted silver but it is evident from the various examples of the emblem shown on this page and opposite that the colours and shape of the 'Steinbock' varied considerably. Contemporary aircraft from this Staffel still carried the early type Balkenkreuz with the swastika positioned mid-way across the fin and rudder. Other units to carry brown numbers were 3. and 12./JG 51 – the latter unit being formed in August 1940.

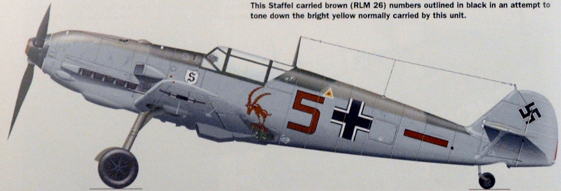


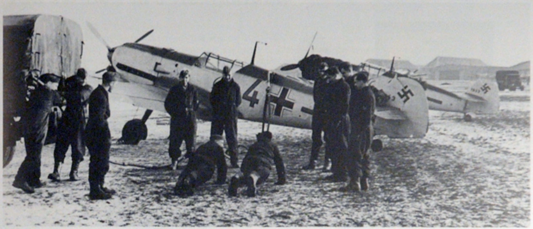


Variant of 6./JG 26 'Steinbock' badge as depicted on Bf 109 E-3 'Brown 5'

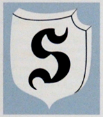
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of 6./JG 26, France, January 1940

This Staffel carried brown (RLM 26) numbers outlined in black in an attempt to tone down the bright yellow normally carried by this unit.

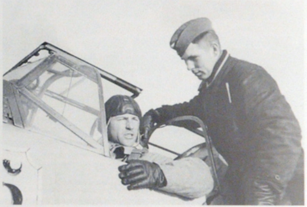




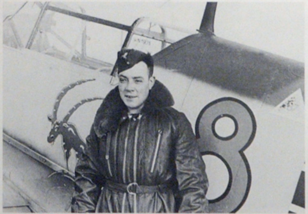
ABOVE: Bf 109 E-3s from 6./JG 26 in Werl, with 'Brown 4' W.Nr. 1943 in the foreground and W.Nr. 1937 behind. Note that the aircraft still carry the old, narrow edged type Balkenkreuz and the Hakenkreuz across the fin and rudder in black. The sixth Staffel of JG 26, like 3./JG 51 and 3.(J)/LG 2, experimented with the use of brown rather than yellow numbers. Note the Bf 110 in the background.



JG 26 'Schlageter'

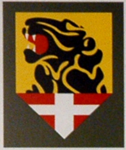


ABOVE: Close-up of the cockpit of Bf 109 E-3, W.Nr. 1944, of 6./JG 26 at Werl, early in 1940, showing Uffz. Ernst Nischik in conversation with his mechanic. Several of this batch Bf 109 Es had their Werk Nummer applied to the rear part of the cockpit canopy just below the horizontal bar as shown in the photo to the left. Visible on the left is part of the JG 26 'Schlageter' badge, which appears to have been touched up with a different type of black paint, while to the right, part of the the horns of the 'Steinbock' Staffel emblem are just visible.

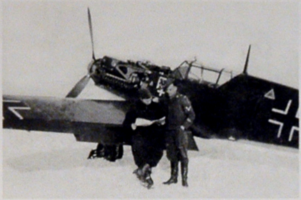


LEFT: Uffz. Josef Ganster in front of his Bf 109 E-3 'Brown 8' of 6./JG 26. The W.Nr. 1935 is inscribed on the cockpit canopy just above his head in a similar position to above. The position of the number '8' and the imperfectly painted black outline are clearly visible. The 6.Staffel 'Steinbock' badge also appears to be a darker colour, probably brown, with details painted in white. As with the aircraft above, the machine is camouflaged in a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. Uffz. Ganster was killed in action on 19 June 1940.

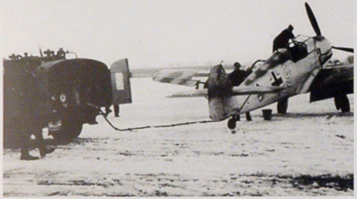
January-April 1940



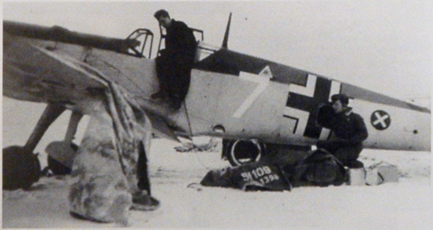
I./JG 76 (later II./JG 54)



ABOVE: A Bf 109 E-1 of 2./JG 76, undergoing engine maintenance, stands in the snow at Frankfurt-am-Main airfield during January 1940. This aircraft carried a 'Red 1' outlined in black. Standing on the right, pilot Obgfr. Milde discusses the news with his mechanic. Note also the rear view mirror above the cockpit, which was a common feature on many Bf 109 Es. Note also the old style fuselage Balkenkreuz. This aircraft was painted in a splinter pattern of black-green (RLM 70) and dark green (RLM 71) on the fuselage sides and uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) underneath.



LEFT: A Bf 109 E of 4./JG 51 coded 'White 9' outlined in black being re-fueled in the snow early in 1940. The aircraft has an interesting modified camouflage scheme of RLM Grey sprayed in large blotches on the upper fuselage and additionally in stripes on the upper wing surfaces. Note the large Balkenkreuz of the late 1939 period on the wing and the 'weeping raven' badge on the rear fuselage without the later inscription of 'Gott strafe England!'



RIGHT: On 28 December 1939, I.(J)/LG 2 left Köln and its border protection duties in northern Germany for an airfield on the North Sea coast at Hage. Here the pilots had to contend with heavy snow covering the airfield. The first Staffel carried the so called 'Spanienkreuz' which was introduced after the campaign in Poland by Hptm. Harro Harder who led the Staffel until October 1939. Harder had previously led 1./J88 in Spain, a unit whose emblem was this cross. The aircraft's W.Nr. '1398' was painted on the engine cowling cover, a feature that would disappear progressively from the spring of 1940.

JANUARY-APRIL 1940

The Forces are Assembled

By February 1940, *'Fall Gelb'* ('Contingency Yellow') – the German plan for the invasion of France and the Low Countries - had been finalised. The plan was for *Generaloberst* Wilhelm von Leeb's Army Group C to hold the Franco-German border opposite the Maginot line while *Generaloberst* Gerd von Rundstedt's Army Group A made the main attack, with most of the armour, through the Ardennes forests of southern Belgium and Luxembourg. Simultaneously *Generaloberst* Fedor von Bock's Army Group B was to mount a secondary advance through northern Belgium and southern Holland to draw the main British and French forces north so that Rundstedt could hit their flank. Von Rundstedt's ground forces were to be supported by *General der Flieger* Albert Kesselring's *Luftflotte 2* to which the fighter *Geschwader* JG 26, JG 27, JG 51 and ZG 26 were subordinated. Von Bock's air support was to be provided by *General der Flieger* Hugo Sperrle's *Luftflotte* 3 to which JG 2, JG 51, JG 53, JG 54, JG 77 and ZG 2 were attached.

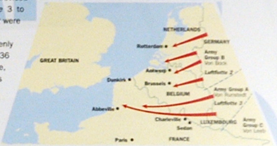
In theory, the two sides were fairly evenly matched on the ground, the Germans having 136 divisions and the four Allies – Britain, France, Holland and Belgium – 149 in all. The Allies possessed many more tanks, and some were of superior quality. In the air, however, the Germans were very much stronger with 3,868 combat aircraft (of which 2,776 were serviceable) facing around 2,600 Allied machines. Apart from this, many Allied aircraft were old and suffered from inferior performance.

The largest concentration of Allied air forces was in northern France where the *Armée de l'Air* and the British Advanced Air Striking Force declared an establishment of 1,250 aircraft (408 of which were British). Apart from the fact that many of the French aircraft were obsolete, another problem was that some of the British fighter squadrons were in the process of exchanging their old Gladiator biplane fighters for the newer Hawker Hurricane. In addition, of the 213 bombers, only 72 Blenheims were deemed suitable for daylight operations. Again, most Belgian Air Force aircraft were obsolete, over 40 per cent of them comprising variants of the Fairey Fox light bomber of the 1920s, although a few Gloster Gladiator and Hawker Hurricane fighters were available. On the other hand, the Dutch *Luchtvaartafdeling* did have a relatively modern air force equipped with Fokker D.XXI, and G.I as well as some Italian CR. 42 fighters, Douglas DB-8A attack aircraft, Fokker T.V medium bombers and Fokker C.V and C.X reconnaissance aircraft.

In contrast to this the *Luftwaffe* was equipped with largely modern aircraft and, perhaps even more important, possessed a much more efficient command structure. The fighters, for example, were concentrated into *Fliegerkorps* each with its own dedicated signals system which allowed them to react to changing operational demands as they occurred.

By the time the invasion was ready to be launched in May 1940, a further four single-engined fighter *Gruppen* had been formed, II./JG 27 (on 1 January 1940), III./JG 52 (on 1 March 1940), III./JG 2 (on 27 April 1940) and III./JG 3 (on 1 March 1940). Patrol operations on the French border continued, March 1940 ending in a major victory for the *Jagdwaffe* when II./JG 53 bounced 11 MS 406s of GC III/7, shot down three and forced another three to crash land. JG 53 was to prove the most successful *Luftwaffe* unit with 71 confirmed claims made during the *'Sitzkrieg'*. *Hptm.* Werner Mölders of III./JG 53 was the leading ace. The *Luftwaffe* had lost 56 fighters.

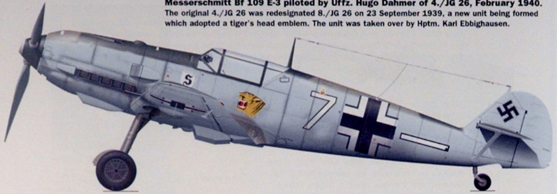
Between 3 September 1939 and 9 May 1940, the French Air Force flew 10,119 sorties in the forward army zones, claiming 88 victories (of which 60 per cent were Bf 109s) for the loss of 74 aircraft including 55 reconnaissance machines. The top scoring pilot was Sergeant Sales of GC II/5 (flying Hawk 75 As) who had five victories.

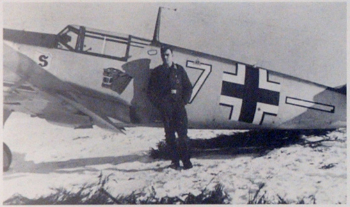


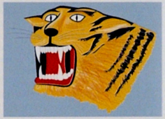
ABOVE: 'Fall Gelb' ('Contingency Yellow') the plan for the German attack in the West.

BELOW: The wreckage of a French Potez 637 reconnaissance aircraft (No.17) of GAR I/33 shot down by flak on 16 October 1939 on the German side of the border. Two of the crew were killed and the other severely wounded and taken prisoner. Although not shot down by German fighters, this aircraft illustrates the results of some of the operations that took place during this period of the war.

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 piloted by Uffz. Hugo Dahmer of 4./JG 26, February 1940. The original 4./JG 26 was redesignated 8./JG 26 on 23 September 1939, a new unit being formed which adopted a tiger's head emblem. The unit was taken over by Hptm. Karl Ebbighausen.



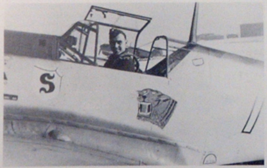


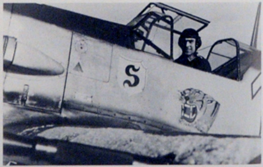


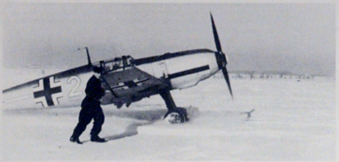
4./JG 26
This badge is a representation of that painted on Hugo Dahmer's Bf 109 E-3 'White 7' but study of the unit's aircraft shows there were slight variations

ABOVE AND BELOW: Uffz. Hugo Dahmer with his Bf 109 E-3 coded 'White 7' and horizontal bar outlined in black. These aircraft were camouflaged in a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The tiger emblem replaced the famous 'Adamson' badge when the new 4./JG 26 was created in the autumn of 1939.

BELOW: Close up of a Bf 109 E -3, possibly 'White 12', of 4./JG 26 with the tiger's head badge. Note the differences between this badge to the one on 'White 7'. The brown triangle forward of the 'Schlageter Geschwader' script 'S' emblem indicates the oil filler point.

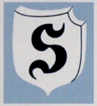




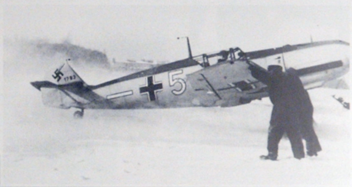


LEFT: This Bf 109 E-3 of 4./JG 26 coded 'White 2' has the later style fuselage and underwing crosses with wide white angles. The aircraft is shown taxying through deep snow at Dortmund airfield in February 1940.

BELOW: Unlike 'White 2' this 4./JG 26 Bf 109 E-3 coded 'White 5', W.Nr. 1793, has the older style fuselage and underwing Balkenkreuz with the Hakenkreuz painted across the fin and rudder. This aircraft was also photographed at Dortmund airfield in early February 1940.

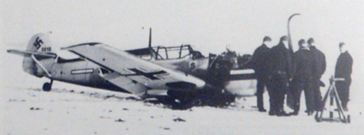


JG 26
'Schlageter' emblem

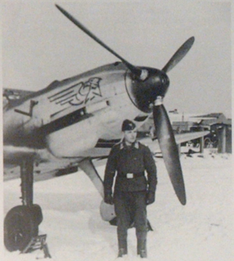


ABOVE: On 27 January 1940, II./JG 26 left its winter airfield of Werl and joined the Geschwaderstab and I. Gruppe at Dortmund. Here 'White 12' of 4./JG 26 begins its take-off run through snow in February 1940.

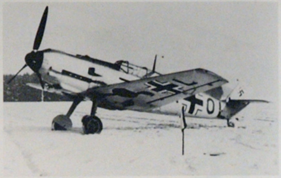
RIGHT: Photographed after suffering a crash landing at Dortmund during early February 1940, probably due to an undercarriage collapse, this Bf 109 E-1 of 4./JG 26 was coded 'White 5' edged in black. Note the early type crosses with thin white outlines, the Hakenkreuz painted across the fin and rudder and the W.Nr. 3215 in black.



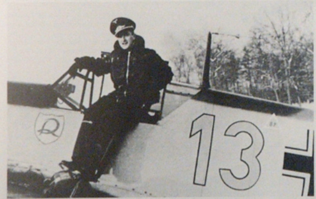
BELOW: A factory fresh Bf 109 E-3 awaits delivery to a fighter unit. The aircraft still carries its factory call sign of '??+OL' painted in black on the fuselage sides and under the wings. The aircraft is similarly finished to the one shown to the left but in addition had yellow (RLM 04) painted gun trays.



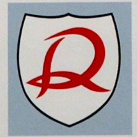
ABOVE: Photographed in the snow of January 1940, this close-up shows the nose of a Bf 109 E-3 of 6./JG 52 at Mannheim-Sandhofen. At this time, the Staffel eagle emblem consisted merely of a black outline painted on the nose. Shortly afterwards the eagle became more stylish and was painted black with blue and white detail. II./JG 52 left Mannheim-Sandhofen airfield at the end of January 1940. The aircraft carried a splinter pattern on the uppersurfaces of dark green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) and light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath



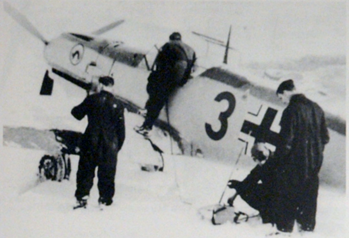
ABOVE: A snowy scene at Mannheim-Sandhofen airfield showing 'mans' best friend' at play with his master. Like most servicemen from other countries dogs were common companions in the Luftwaffe. In the background are two Bf 109 Es of I./JG 51 which at this time was operating under the control of JG 53.

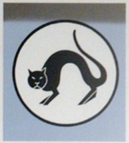


ABOVE: 'Yellow 13' probably a Bf 109 E-1 was flown by Oblt. Franz Fiby of 3./JG 2 towards end of March 1940. The aircraft still has the old style national markings on the fuselage and the black outline to the number has been finished in freehand. The JG 2 badge has been applied with a stencil and has neat edges.



JG 2 'Richthofen'
Geschwader emblem

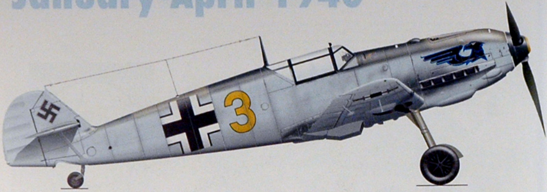




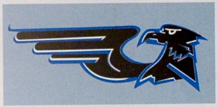
2./JG 20

ABOVE AND RIGHT: In March 1940, 2./JG 20 moved from Döberitz where it had operated in the defence of Berlin earlier in 1940, to Bönninghardt where it was placed under the control of the Stab JG 51. Eventually the unit was to be redesignated 8./JG 51. Here a Bf 109 E 'Red 3' (outlined in black), is being checked out for radio communication. In contrast to the aircraft operated by this unit during the latter part of 1939 (see Jagdwaffe, Section 3, page 250 and 251) this aircraft was camouflaged with a splinter pattern of black-green (RLM 70) and dark green (RLM 71) on the uppersurfaces and fuselage sides with light-blue (RLM 65) underneath and also had the new style national markings. The 'black cat' emblem was also retained in the same position on the nose as on earlier aircraft.

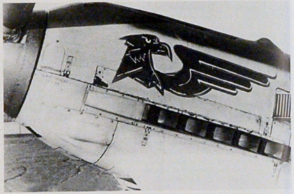
LEFT: A group of NCO pilots of 2./JG 20 photographed probably still at Döberitz airfield in February 1940. From left to right are: Uffz. Rudolf Rothenfelder, Uffz. Hans Busch, Uffz. Walter Harheim, Uffz. Bernhard Lausch (killed in action on 4 July 1942) and Uffz. Maximilian Mayerl (awarded the Ritterkreuz in December 1943). Busch and Harheim were both killed in combat on 24 August 1940 when their Bf 109s collided with each other over Ramsgate. At that time they were serving with 8./JG 51 which had been formed from 2./JG 20. Note the large Balkenkreuz on the underside of the wing which was only used officially for a short time from October 1939 to early 1940 and should have been superseded with a new style at this time.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 6./JG 52, Speyer, March 1940
Initially, the distinctive eagle emblem was painted on the engine cowling as a simple black outline. It was later modified to mainly black with blue and white details.

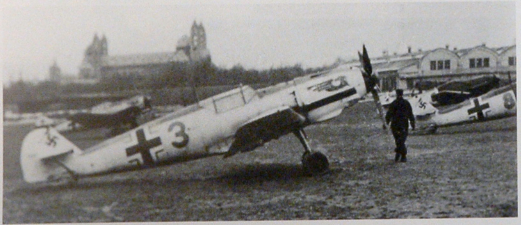


II./JG 52 'Eagle' emblem

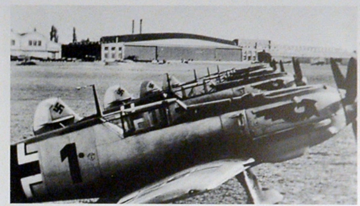


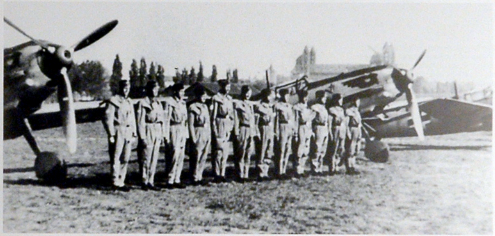
RIGHT: Close-up details of the II./JG 52 emblem painted on the nose of a Bf 109 E. Note the variation of the markings around the engine coolant filling point; this cover was normally outlined in green (RLM 25) with black lettering inside, reading 'Glykol Wasser 50-50'. In this case the wording is painted below the cover in larger lettering.

BELOW: Taken at Speyer in March 1940, these Bf 109 E-1s belong to 6./JG 52. The nearest aircraft carries 'Yellow 3' outlined in black with 'Yellow 8' behind.

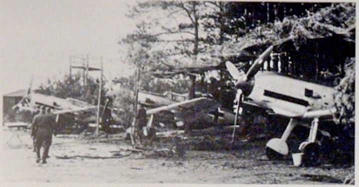


RIGHT AND BELOW: On 1 February 1940, II./JG 52 transferred from Mannheim-Sandhofen to Speyer where it remained until 16 May 1940. The nearest aircraft is a Bf 109 E-3 and also carries the eagle badge normally associated with the 6. Staffel. However the unusually thick number '1' appears to be red outlined in black indicating 5. Staffel. All the Bf 109 Es of this unit at this time were camouflaged in a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. 'Red 1' also has yellow (RLM 04) gun trays and may have been flown by the Staffelkapitän Lt. Werner Lederer.



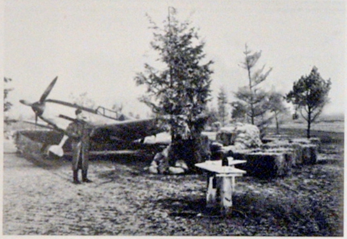


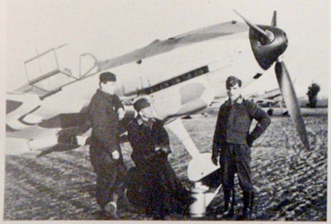
LEFT: Crews of II.(J)/Trägergruppe 186 relax at Nordholz with several Bf 109 Es in the background. Hptm. Heinrich Seeliger was the commander at this time. This scene was typical during the Sitzkrieg period of the war.



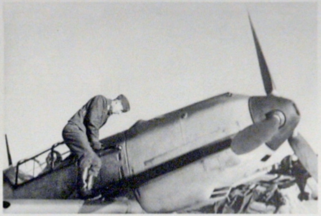
LEFT: Three Bf 109 E-3s of II.(J)/ Tr. Gr. 186 stand hidden amongst the trees. These aircraft appear brand new and may have just been delivered to the unit. Due to the rapid expansion of the fighter force, many adopted airfields were not fully equipped with the latest support facilities and in many cases anything suitable, as seen here, was utilised in a makeshift manner.

RIGHT: In contrast with the RAF at the time, many front line Luftwaffe airfields were based around any suitable makeshift flat field. Here a Bf 109 E-1 of II.(J)/ Tr. Gr. 186 has been camouflaged amongst some trees and surrounded by bails of straw. It appears that the work table has been formed by using some trestles and a milk churn!

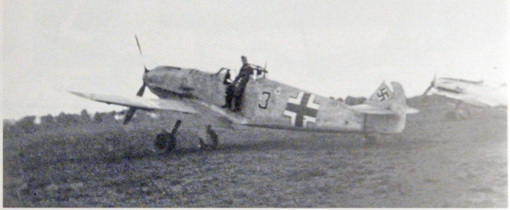




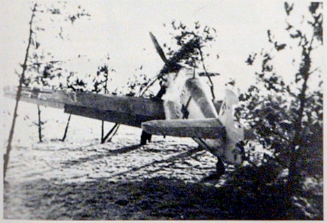
LEFT: What appears to be a brand new Bf 109 E-3 just delivered to II.(J)/ Tr. Gr. 186 around early March 1940, though the aircraft still has the large 1939 national markings on the underside of the wings. The aircraft appears to carry the number 'Red 5' outlined in white and also has the new 'square' canopy top which was a modification providing simpler manufacture than the original rounded top. The spinner and propeller were painted black-green (RLM 70) and the rest of the aircraft carried a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath.



LEFT: By the beginning of 1940, Luftwaffe fighter units had begun to adopt a modified camouflage scheme with a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. This eventually proved too conspicuous and began to be overpainted with grey or green or combinations of both once the Spring weather started to break. This Bf 109 E-1 of II.(J)/Tr. Gr. 186 is being readied for action at Nordholz airfield and still carries the large crosses under the wings introduced in October 1939 (see Section 3 page 276 for more details).



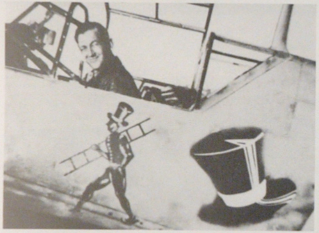
ABOVE: Two Bf 109 Es of II. (J)/Tr. Gr. 186 in early spring 1940. The aircraft in the distance has the standard early 1940 camouflage of black-green (RLM 70) and the rest of the aircraft carried a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The aircraft in the foreground has a square canopy and is probably an E-3. The smaller than normal number 'Black 3' is outlined in white and the fuselage appears to have been given a light mottled overspray of dark green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02).

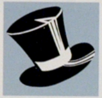


LEFT: This Bf 109 E coded 'White 3' (outlined in black) of 1./JG 54, was photographed during February 1940. At this time, the Staffel was led by Oberleutnant Reinhard Seiler, an experienced Legion Condor ace who had scored nine victories in Spain, a tally which placed him in joint fifth position.

RIGHT: A ceremonial visit being paid to JG 54, early in 1940. Such visits were commonplace throughout 1939 and 1940 and were used as morale boosters. On such occasions awards and medals were often presented as well as new or replacement equipment, in this case some Bf 109 Es.

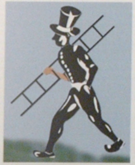
BELOW: Oblt.Reinhard 'Seppl' Seiler, seen here sitting in his Bf 109 E, was a veteran of 2.J/88 in the Spanish Civil War and was Staffelkapitän of 1./JG 54. He used the 'top hat' badge, as was used often in Spain, as his personal emblem. The 'chimney sweep' was introduced as the Staffel badge, since it was considered a good luck omen and was used in several variations wearing a 'top hat'. This aircraft appears to have been crudely re-painted and shows signs of the old 1939 dark green paint bleeding through.



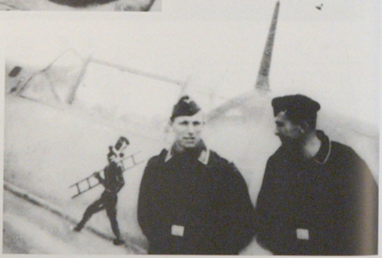


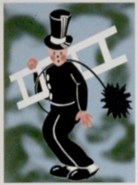
Oblt. Reinhard Seiler's 'top hat' badge

BELOW: Two mechanics in front of a Bf 109 E of 1./JG 54 around March 1940. This Staffel was led by Oblt. Reinhard Seiler a pilot who had served in Spain and although he used the 'top hat' badge as a personal emblem, the Staffel badge used the 'top hat' worn by a chimney sweep.

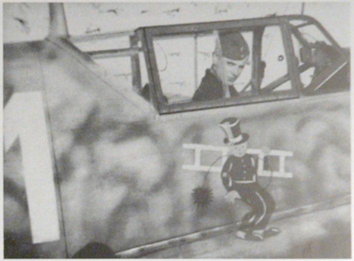


1./JG 54 'chimney sweep' badge



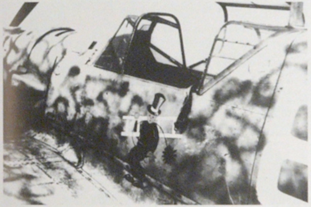


Another variant of 1./JG 54 'chimney sweep' badge

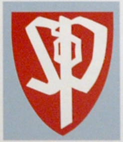


ABOVE: Chief mechanic Wilhelm Vermeulen in the cockpit of a Bf 109 E coded 'White 1' of 1./JG 54. This aircraft may be an E-3 variant with the modified flat style canopy. The aircraft of this Staffel appears to have been one of the first to have the scribble camouflage of dark green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) sprayed over the light-blue (RLM 65).

BELOW: A mechanic cleans the cowling of a Bf 109 E which has the badge of 2./JG 3 painted very small on the cowling.

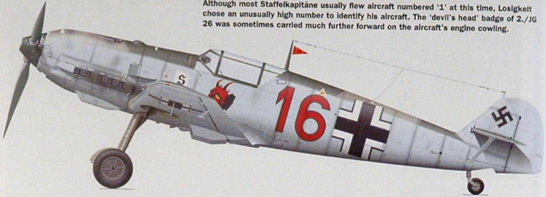


ABOVE: The port side view of a Bf 109 E, 'White 8' of 1./JG 54 showing the Staffel badge, which together with the photograph at top right, indicates that it was featured on both sides of the fuselage and also reversed. This aircraft still has the older rounded style canopy. Note also that the scribble camouflage has been extended to cover the wing uppersurfaces.

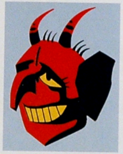


2./JG 3 badge representing the shield of the 'Sudeten-Deutsch Partei'

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 flown by Oberleutnant Fritz Losigkeit, Staffelkapitän of 2./JG 26, Werl, March 1940.
Although most Staffelkapitäne usually flew aircraft numbered '1' at this time, Losigkeit chose an unusually high number to identify his aircraft. The 'devil's head' badge of 2./JG 26 was sometimes carried much further forward on the aircraft's engine cowling.



LEFT: Oblt. Fritz Losigkeit climbs from the cockpit of his Bf 109 E of 2./JG 26, coded 'Red 16', at Bönninghardt or Werl in February or March 1940. After his capture in Spain and subsequent return to Germany via France (see Section Two), Losigkeit was debriefed at Kitzbühel and joined his commander, Gotthard Handrick at I./JG 26. Losigkeit took over as Kapitän of 2./JG 26 on 23 September 1939.



2./JG 26
This variant of the 'devil's head' badge was painted on the side of Oblt. Fritz Losigkeit's Bf 109 E without the normal shield background

RIGHT: Oblt. Fritz Losigkeit climbs from the cockpit of his Bf 109 E, coded 'Red 16', at Bönninghardt or Werl in February or March 1940.

"For the Führer and the Reich, with God at our side!"

ERWIN LEYKAUF

Erwin Leykauf saw combat throughout the war, ending as an Oberleutnant with JG 7. He was awarded the German Cross in Gold on 4 August 1942.

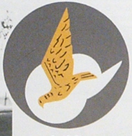
"I was born at Ansbach on 22 January 1918. I chose to enlist in the *Luftwaffe* in 1936 with the intention of becoming a pilot-officer. By this time I already was an experienced glider pilot. I received the majority of my instruction at Berlin-Gatow where pilot training seemed to be less important than military principles and discipline. In 1938, I qualified as a fighter pilot, a very exciting 'job'. All over the world this was the dream of so many young people... but I must say that I found it relatively easy to become pilot. The most important factor was if you had good health. We were, it is true, continuously challenged from the physical as well as the psychological point of view and this was difficult. In 1938, never having appreciated this strict discipline, I decided to leave the armed forces, because I wanted to begin technical studies in Munich. Like many others of my generation, commencing studying in 1938/39 was to prove futile - the war interrupting such ambitions. I was called up at the end of August 1939, but avoided the campaign in Poland, being transferred to 3./JG 26 on the Western Front. At this time, the invasion of Poland was not seen by the German people as vile aggression, as a crime. We considered it our right to try to get back a part of our country that a treaty had stolen from us in 1918. We wanted East-Prussia and Danzig returned to us. During our youth the notion of honour was greatly developed and we all felt hurt to see our country so despoiled.

On 6 May 1940, after a short holiday, I returned to my unit at München-Gladbach (now known as Mönchengladbach). On the 9th, we received orders that we were to be ready for action against the West next day. We all thought that this was just another exercise and that war would never break out against the West. For example I remember our officer at the Gatow school saying: "*Gentlemen, anything can happen, except war*!" I now realise that our equipment was not well prepared for the war that we launched, for example our Bf 109s had no central guns unlike the opposing French Moranes.

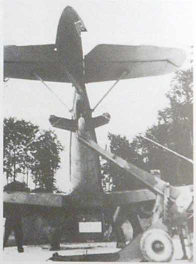
At five o'clock in the morning of 10 May, we assembled for a briefing and received our mission orders. We also received the news that our paratroops were already in action. We all were completely astonished. This surprise was soon replaced by excitement. Our *Staffelkapitän* closed the briefing with the following words: "*For the* Führer *and the* Reich, *with God at our side*!"

On the 10th we flew five missions over Belgium. The first was launched at 6.30 am in the Tongeren area. We intercepted our first British aircraft, a biplane Gloster Gladiator, which was quickly shot down. Then we strafed Sint Truiden airfield under heavy anti-aircraft fire. On my second mission, I claimed my first Gladiator when our three aircraft sighted a large formation of the enemy fighters. I don't remember how many of them there were but we were certainly outnumbered. They all disappeared, avoiding combat except for one which turned toward us, looking for battle. We were so 'green' at this time that most of our shooting was inaccurate. Nevertheless I managed to hit the Gladiator and it caught fire. The pilot jumped out while the crippled plane dived into the ground and crashed. This was my first victory. Later, we fought with Hurricanes in the Brussels area."

ABOVE: Oblt. Erwin Leykauf whilst with 3./JG 21 around March 1940, sits on the wing of his Bf 109 E-3. He was one of the few pilots to survive from the early formation of JG 21.



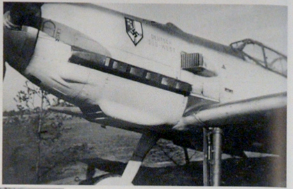
3./JG 21
Staffel badge

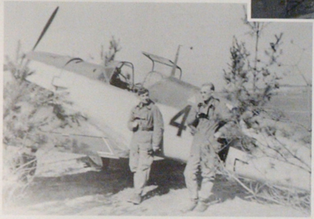


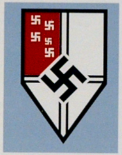
RIGHT: An unusual view of a Bf 109 E undergoing gun calibration adjustments. Note the hydraulic jack and anchor ropes to hold the aircraft steady. The aircraft still has the dark green uppersurfaces with the Hakenkreuz across the fin and rudder. The underside shows clearly the fuselage bulkhead spacings.

RIGHT: A Bf 109 E-1 belonging to 2./JG 27 which was based at Krefeld during March-April 1940. The emblem on the nose was used for a short time by 2. Staffel and the inscriptions carried by the various aircraft of this unit denoted the various German foreign colonies. The spinner had the centre section painted red (RLM 23) denoting 2.Staffel. The aircraft were camouflaged in a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The name 'Deutsch Süd-West', possibly in red, is painted behind the Staffel badge on the nose of this Bf 109 E.

BELOW: Two pilots from 2./JG 27, Lt. Fritz Keller, left, talks to an unidentified pilot in front of a Bf 109 E-1. This aircraft carried the number 'Black 4' outlined in red and the inscription 'Kamerun' behind the Staffel badge on the nose. Note the 'do not step' white lines painted on the upper surface of the wing flap.







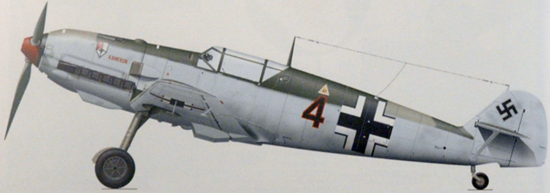
2./JG 27

KAMERUN

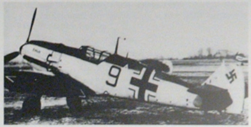
Name carried by
Bf 109 E-1 'Black 4'

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 2./JG 27, Krefeld March-April 1940

The Bf 109 Es of 2./JG 27 based at Krefeld, carried unusual black numbers outlined thinly in red. The Staffel badge was painted on the nose of some aircraft for a short time and in addition had the names of various German colonies painted after it. 'Black 4' outlined in red had the name 'KAMERUN' painted on the nose possibly also in red. The aircraft was camouflaged in a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath.



RIGHT: Around February 1940, twelve Bf 109 E-1s were delivered to 2./JG 27 with the name of former German colonies painted on their cowlings. This aircraft, W.Nr. 738, coded 'Black 9' outlined in red was named 'Togo' after the republic in West Africa which was a former German protectorate from 1894. It was invaded by British and French forces in 1914 and divided between them.

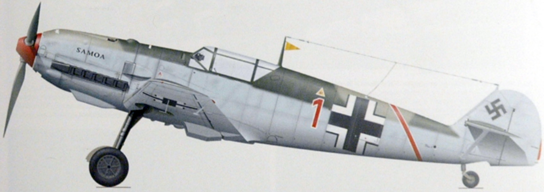


LEFT: All the Bf 109 Es supplied to 2./JG 27 based at Plantlünne or Krefeld in March 1940 carried the names of German colonies painted in black or possibly red on their engine cowlings. This aircraft was 'Deutsche Südwest Afrika' (now Namibia). Note the red tip to the spinner.

ABOVE: The Bf 109 E of Oblt. Gert Framm, Staffelkapitän of 2./JG 27. Coded 'Red 1' outlined in white, it also had a band, to the same thickness and colour, set at approximately 45 degrees around the rear fuselage. This aircraft had the name 'Samoa' painted on the cowling. All twelve aircraft delivered to 2./JG 27 at this time had the names of former German colonies painted on their cowlings. These were: 'Samoa' (Samoa), 'Kamerun' (Cameroon), 'Palau Inseln' (Pallau Islands), 'Karolinen Inseln' (Caroline Islands), 'Deutsche Ost Afrika' (part of Tanzania), 'Neu Guinea' (New Guinea), Salomo Inseln' (Solomon Islands), 'Marianen Inseln' (Mariana Islands), 'Tsingtao' (Qingdao), 'Deutsche Südwest Afrika' (Namibia), 'Togo' (Togo) and 'Marschall Inseln' (Marshall Islands).

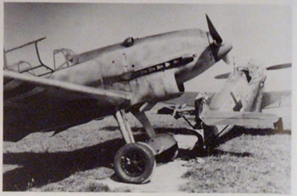
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 flown by Oberleutnant Gert Framm, Staffelkapitän of 2./JG 27, Spring 1940

The markings on Framm's aircraft were distinctive from the other Bf 109 Es of the Staffel in that it carried a 'Red 1' outlined in white, and in addition had a band, set at approximately 45 degrees around the rear fuselage, to the same thickness and colour as the number. It had the name 'SAMOA' painted on the cowling.



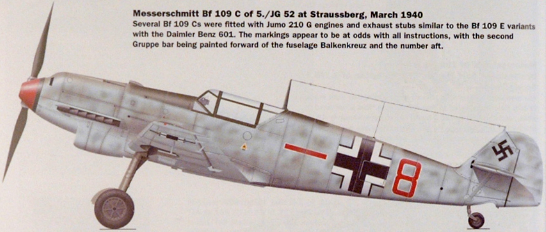
RIGHT: Two Bf 109 E-1s from 2./JG 27 at Krefeld. 'Black 3' and 'Black 4', had both numbers thinly outlined in red (RLM 23). The aircraft appear to be ready for re-fuelling. Both machines have the Hakenkreuz painted in the new position on the fin only.

RIGHT: These two Bf 109 Cs of 5./JG 52 appear to have sustained damage during a taxying accident. The aircraft nearest the camera has the removable part of the spinner painted red (RLM 23), and still has the large underwing crosses officially used between October 1939 and the beginning of 1940. The tail-damaged machine in the background and illustrated below has the new standard national markings as introduced at the beginning of 1940. These aircraft were camouflaged in the standard splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath and a light mottle of RLM 71 and RLM 02. These aircraft may have been used for training and familiarisation purposes as they have no armament fitted.

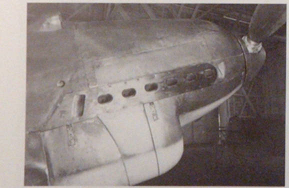


Messerschmitt Bf 109 C of 5./JG 52 at Straussberg, March 1940

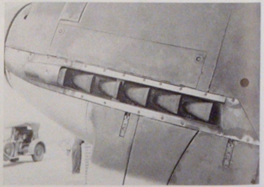
Several Bf 109 Cs were fitted with Jumo 210 G engines and exhaust stubs similar to the Bf 109 E variants with the Daimler Benz 601. The markings appear to be at odds with all instructions, with the second Gruppe bar being painted forward of the fuselage Balkenkreuz and the number aft.



BELOW: The first of **four photographs taken from a Messerschmitt document dated 8 December 1939 showing external details of various engine cowlings and exhaust manifolds. Here,** a standard Bf 109 C fitted with a Jumo 210 G engine with exhaust vents emitting directly from the engine cylinders.

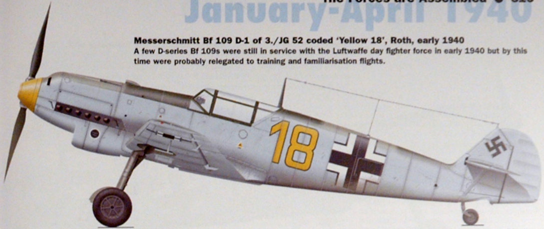


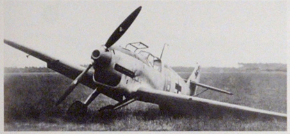
BELOW: A Bf 109 C fitted with a Jumo 210 G with exhaust ports venting at 90 degrees via oval ducts. It was found that by venting the exhaust in this manner the thrust of the emission had a slight improvement on the speed of the aircraft. The ports fitted on this machine are rounded with an oval opening.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 D-1 of 3./JG 52 coded 'Yellow 18', Roth, early 1940

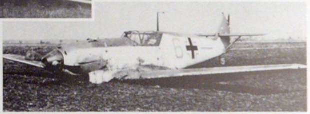
A few D-series Bf 109s were still in service with the Luftwaffe day fighter force in early 1940 but by this time were probably relegated to training and familiarisation flights.



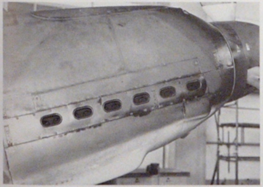


LEFT: A Bf 109 D of 3./JG 52 at Roth early 1940, coded 'Yellow 18' (RLM 04) outlined in black. The aircraft was camouflaged in a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath together with a yellow spinner. Judging by the undamaged propeller, the damage to this aircraft could been caused by very strong wind which caused the machine to tip up and one of the undercarriage legs. As with the aircraft opposite this machine is likely to have been used for training and familiarisation flights.

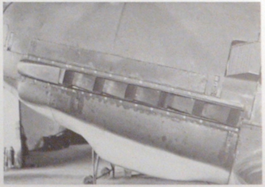
RIGHT: A Bf 109 B-2 of 6./JG 52 coded 'Yellow 6' with a horizontal II. Gruppe bar the same colour and thickness as the number. This machine is camouflaged in the same colours as the one above but still caries the old style position of the Hakenkreuz across the fin and rudder. The W.Nr. 589 is painted in white on the fin. At this time, this machine was probably used for training and has either had an undercarriage failure or the pilot forgot to lower it, which was not uncommon.



BELOW: This Bf 109 E has a Daimler Benz DB 601 A engine with simple oval exhaust ports. It is interesting to note that the gun troughs have been faired over and modified and the spinner appears smaller and more pointed than standard.

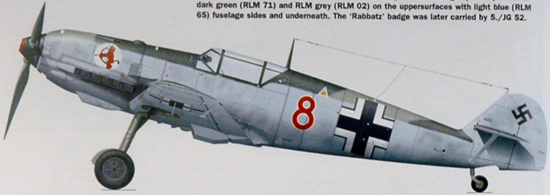


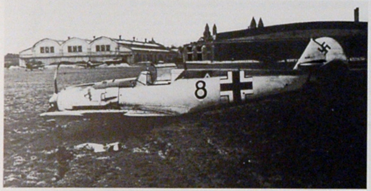
BELOW: A standard Bf 109 E fitted with a DB 601 A showing further modified exhaust ports slightly larger than those shown on the Bf 109 C opposite but not angled back as far. They are also of a simpler, squarer design and construction.

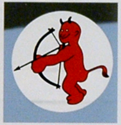


Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 flown by Uffz. Ludwig Bielmeier of 2./JG 52, France, May 1940

Unlike the third Gruppe, I./JG 52 carried standard fighter camouflage splinter pattern of dark green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) fuselage sides and underneath. The 'Rabbatz' badge was later carried by 5./JG 52.

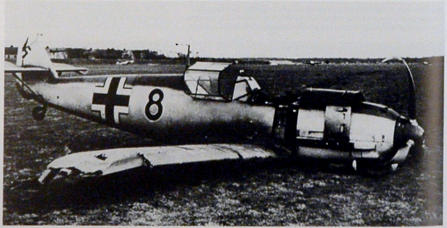


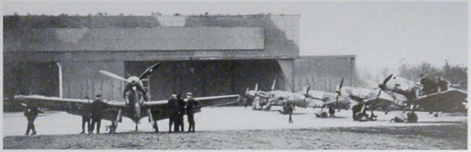


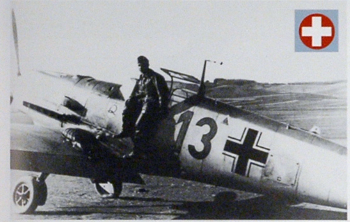


2./JG 52 'Rabbatz' badge, later carried by 5./JG 52

RIGHT AND ABOVE: This Bf 109 E-1, W.Nr. 3403, of 2./JG 52 belly landed in early spring 1940, possibly at Speyer near the French border. The colour of the individual letter '8' was probably red, outlined in white, although black was being introduced to identify the second Staffel in a Gruppe around this time. Note the 'Rabbatz Staffel' (trouble-maker) emblem, a naked devil with a bow and arrow painted on the engine cowling.





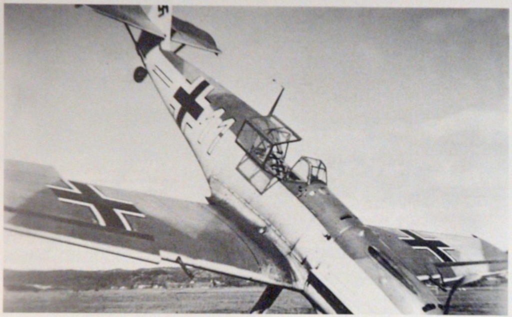


ABOVE: Bf 109 E-1s and E-3s of the so-called 'Rabbatz' Staffel of JG 52. These aircraft carry very non-standard camouflage schemes, with each machine having a distinctively different pattern. The colours of dark green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) have been sharply defined over the top and sides of the fuselage. The second aircraft from the right is coded '12' which should be in red for either the 2. Staffel or later the 5. Staffel. However the colour is more likely to be yellow which opens the question of whether the 'Rabbatz' Staffel badge may have been adopted as the II. Gruppe emblem as no previous one has been identified.

LEFT: This is the same 'Yellow 13' outlined in black Bf 109 E-1of 3./JG 2 as shown on page 302, but at Lauenburg and at this time was flown by Uffz. Heinz Tilly. The gothic red 'R' badge of the Richthofen Geschwader is clearly visible as is the old style Balkenkreuz. Although the aircraft is painted dark green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath, it appears that the original dark green on the fuselage is beginning to bleed through the surface. Note also this machine has a red circle with white cross indicating the position of the first aid kit.

RIGHT: Four pilots from 4./JG 2 pictured around one of their Bf 109 E-3s at Nordholz at the end of February 1940. From left to right are Lt. Heinz Bolze, Oblt. Hans 'Assi' Hahn holding dog, Ofw. Nels and Ofw. Siegfried Schnell. Like Hahn, Schnell was later awarded the Ritterkreuz with Eichenlaub (Oak Leaves).

BELOW: Oblt. Hans 'Assi' Hahn, Staffelkapitän of 4./JG 2 prepares for an operational sortie in February 1940. At this time, he had a bad case of toothache, no doubt accentuated by the extreme cold. By this time, II./JG 2 had transferred from Zerbst to Nordholz, an old airship base situated between Hamburg and Cuxhaven.



ABOVE: Often referred to as 'The flyers monument' this Bf 109 E-3 has nosed over clearly showing the splinter pattern on the uppersurfaces. Note the light-blue (RLM 65) has been taken quite high over the leading edge of the wing. Note also the scuff marks near the wing-root where the mechanics and armourers would stand to carry out their tasks. The demarcation line between the upper and lower paintwork has extremely sharp edges with the camouflage pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides clearly defined.

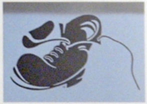
ABOVE: Ground crews from 4./JG 2 have concealed this Bf 109 E-3, coded 'White 12' outlined in black, amongst some trees at Nordholz in March 1940.

LEFT: A Bf 109 E-3 coded 'White 13' outlined in black, of 4./JG 2 taken at Nordholz at the end of February 1940. Although the nominal strength of a fighter Staffel at this time was twelve aircraft, Bf 109s of the period were often seen with numbers as high as '15'.

LEFT: Lt. Julius Meimberg tries his hand at riding the donkey presented to 4./JG 2 at Nordholz by the Hagenbeck zoo in Hamburg. Meimberg was later awarded the Ritterkreuz, ending the war as Kommandeur of II./JG 53. A Bf 109 E-3 'White 3' can be seen in the background. All the Bf 109s of the unit at this time carried the camouflage pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath.

RIGHT: From left, Lt. Julius Meimberg, Uffz. Anton Glomb, Fw. Karl-Heinz Harbauer, Fw. Nels, Oblt. Hans 'Assi' Hahn, Oblt. Lothar Krutein, unknown and Ofw. Siegfried Schnell pose with the donkey presented to the unit. An unusual feature of 4./JG 2's aircraft at this time was that their white numbers were outlined in black.

BELOW: A line-up of Bf 109 E-1s belonging to I./JG 77 showing machines from 2. and 3. Staffel occupying the same airfield prior to moving to their respective newly designated airfields on the German Bight. Note the I./JG 77 badge, the old boot, painted in black on the nose of the nearest Bf 109 which also has yellow (RLM 04) gun troughs. 'Yellow 10' of the 3. Staffel with probably the last aircraft of the 2. Staffel coded 'Red 15' beyond.



I./JG 77 badge introduced by Johannes Janke and nick-named 'Wanderzirkus Janke' (Janke's Wandering Circus) The badge was designed by Lt Franz Hahn (later Kommandeur of I./JG 4)

Luftwaffe forces available for
the Invasion of Norway and Denmark
9 April 1940

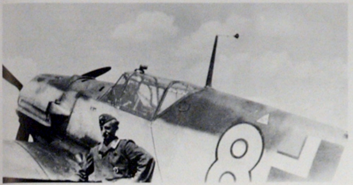
X.Fliegerkorps

2.(H)/10	Hs 126	
1.(F)/120	Do 17 P	Lübeck-Blankensee
1.(F)/122	He 111 & Ju 88	Hamburg/Fühlsbüttel
II./JG 77	Bf 109 E	Westerland/Sylt
I./ZG 1	Bf 110	Barth
I./ZG 76	Bf 110	Westerland/Sylt
I./St.G 1	Ju 87 R	Kiel/Holtenau
Stab KG 4	He 111 P	
I./KG 4	He 111 P	Fassberg
II./KG 4	He 111 P	Lüneburg
III./KG 4	He 111 P	Perleberg
Stab KG 26	He 111 H-3 & H-4	
I./KG 26	He 111 H-3 & H-4	Marx
II./KG 26	He 111 H-3 & H-4	Lübeck Blankensee
III./KG 26	He 111 H-3 & H-4	
Stab KG 30	Ju 88 A	Westerland/Sylt
I./KG 30	Ju 88 A	Westerland/Sylt
II./KG 30	Ju 88 A	Westerland/Sylt
III./KG 30	Ju 88 A	Westerland/Sylt
KGr 100	He 111 H	Nordholz
1./K.Fl.Gr.106	He 115	List/Sylt
1./K.Fl.Gr.506	He 115	List/Sylt
2./K.Fl.Gr.506	He 115	List/Sylt

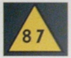
ABOVE: Three pilots of 6./JG 26 sit in readiness for action at their base in Düsseldorf during April 1940. Seen outside through the window, stands a Bf 109 E and on the far wall is a map no doubt showing the disposition of the area of operations. The pilot in the centre is Uffz. Ernst Nischik.

BELOW: Taken in early spring 1940, this photo shows Uffz. Ernst Nischik standing in front of his Bf 109 E-3. He is seen here wearing an all-in-one leather flying suit with a fur collar. It is interesting to note the extensive use of metal zip fasteners on Luftwaffe clothing at this time. Later in 1941 he became an instructor with the Ergänzung Staffel of JG 26. His ultimate fate is unknown. See page 296 for another photo of Nischik in his flying suit and Bf 109 E-3.

ABOVE: This Bf 109 E-1 of 6./JG 26 made a belly landing, in early spring 1940, with the engine still running as indicated by the shape of the propeller. The mechanics have managed to raise the aircraft using an air bag, which when put underneath the machine lifted it off the ground and allowed the lowering of the undercarriage. The deflated bag can be seen stowed on top of the wing. The machine is being pushed off the airfield towards the repair workshop.

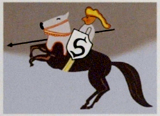


LEFT: A Bf 109 E probably coded 'Yellow 8' outlined in black, of 8./JG 52. This unit was formed at Straussberg on 1 March 1940 and this photo was taken in early April 1940. Note the rear view mirror, a non-standard feature of the aircraft at this time and the '87 octane' triangle which appears to be outlined in black, not white which was normal. The significance of the narrow diagonal line running from the bottom edge of the cockpit is not known but it does appear on other Bf 109 Es.

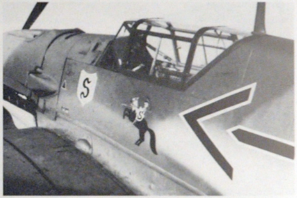


Detail of non-standard octane triangle

RIGHT: Close-up of Obstlt. Hans-Hugo Witt's Bf 109 E-3 showing his personal emblem and the JG 26 'Schlageter Geschwader' badge

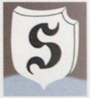


Oberstleutnant Hans-Hugo Witt's personal emblem

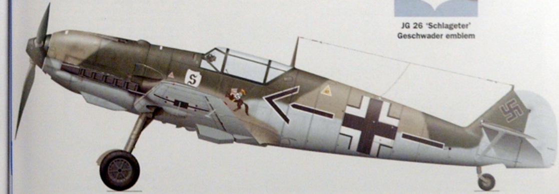


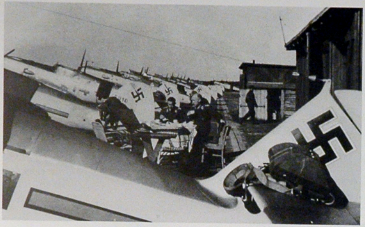
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 flown by Oberstleutnant Hans-Hugo Witt, Geschwaderkommodore of JG 26, April 1940

This aircraft carried an unusual combination of light-blue (RLM 65), RLM grey (RLM 02) and dark green (RLM 71) on the uppersurfaces in a similar pattern to those adopted by JG 53. Witt's aircraft had the chevron and double horizontal bar of a Geschwaderkommodore plus his own personal insignia, a knight on horseback with a 'Schlageter' shield.

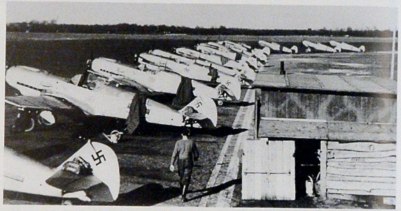


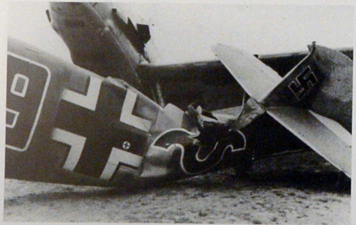
JG 26 'Schlageter' Geschwader emblem



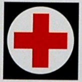


LEFT AND BELOW: Bf 109 E-1s and E-3s belonging to the 4.Staffel and 6.Staffel of JG 26 are lined up on the same airfield apparently being made ready for action. They all appear to have camouflage colours of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. Several aircraft including, W.Nr. 6010, behind the pilots, have the Hakenkreuz applied across the fin and rudder in the old style while others have it painted on the fin only. All of them appear to have the new wide white angled Balkenkreuze. 'Yellow 14' has the 'Steinbock' (Ram) badge of the 6.Staffel painted under the cockpit. In the photo below the second aircraft is coded 'White 1' and this and the following two aircraft have the 'Tiger's Head' badge below the cockpit. All the machines carry the JG 26 'Schlageter Geschwader' badge in the usual place.

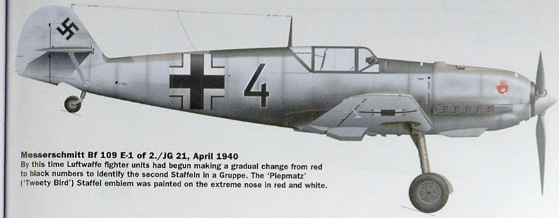




LEFT: One of the first aircraft losses suffered by III./JG 52 was this Bf 109 E -1 coded 'Black 9' outlined in white of the 8. Staffel. This unit adopted the 'wavy line' marking to identify the third Gruppe, other units, such as III./JG 53, used a vertical bar. The caption on the original photograph says it was taken in early April 1940 at Straussberg. Note the yellow band around the fuselage which was not officially used until the Russian campaign, though yellow was the third Gruppe colour.

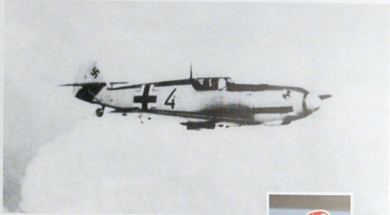


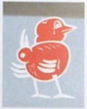
**Variant of
Red Cross marking indicating
position of first aid kit**



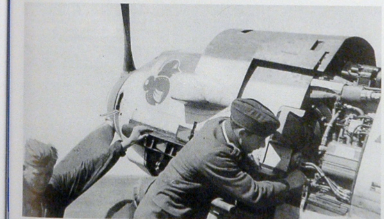
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 2./JG 21, April 1940
By this time Luftwaffe fighter units had begun making a gradual change from red to black numbers to identify the second Staffeln in a Gruppe. The 'Piepmatz' ('Tweety Bird') Staffel emblem was painted on the extreme nose in red and white.

RIGHT: By April 1940, Luftwaffe fighter units were making a gradual change from red to black numbers to identify the second Staffeln in a Gruppe. This aircraft, from 2./JG 21 (which later became 8./JG 54) carried a black number '4' outlined in white, on the fuselage sides. The Staffel emblem, painted on the nose in red and white, depicts a comic bird known as the 'Piepmatz'.



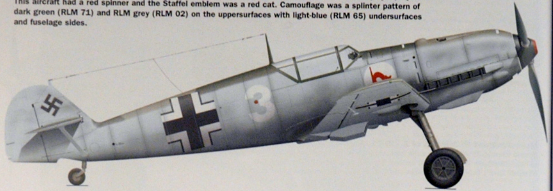


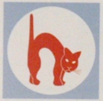
**2./JG 21 'Piepmatz'
(tweetie bird) badge**



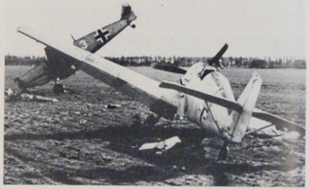
LEFT: Mechanics carry out engine maintenance on another Bf 109 E-1, of 2./JG 21. Note the open 'Glykol' access hatch. This photo shows the Staffel emblem on the engine cowling with the aircraft camouflaged in a splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides. The spinner appears to be painted black-green (RLM 70) to the rear portion with a red (RLM 23) Staffel colour tip devided by a thin white ring.

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of 4./JG 52 which collided with another aircraft at Speyer, April 1940
This aircraft had a red spinner and the Staffel emblem was a red cat. Camouflage was a splinter pattern of dark green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) undersurfaces and fuselage sides.



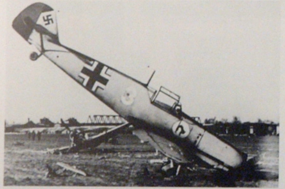


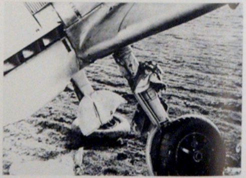
Staffel emblem of
4./JG 52



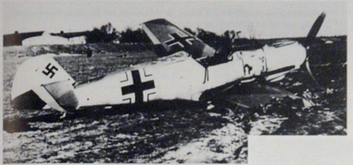
ABOVE: On 8 April 1940 two Bf 109 E-3s from 4./JG 52, coded 'White 3' and 'White 4' collided while taxiing on the airfield at Speyer.

LEFT: Shown after colliding with 'White 4', this Bf 109 E-3, coded 'White 3', carried the badge of 4./JG 52, a red cat on white background. It is likely that the emblem was also carried on the port side also. Although the rudder gives the impression of being a different colour it is more likely that due to a slight offset the surface is just in the shade of the low sun.



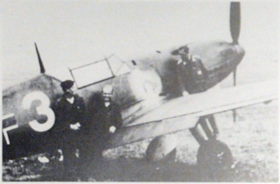


RIGHT: Close-up of the damaged undercarriage of 'White 3' giving considerable detail of the wheels and undercarriage legs

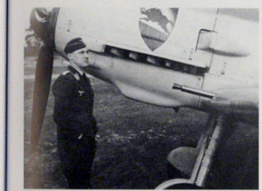


LEFT: Like 'White 3', this Bf 109 E-3, coded 'White 4', also carried the Staffel emblem of 4./JG 52, a red cat on a white background. The collision, which took place in April 1940, resulted in severe damage to the starboard wing of this aircraft.

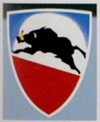
BELOW: This photo of a Bf 109 D, of 4./JG 52 taken probably around October 1939, shows the aircraft still in its camouflage of black-green (RLM 70) as used in the Polish campaign. Here 'White 3' also carries the 'red cat' Staffel emblem but the white background is not symmetrical as was applied to later Bf 109 Es.



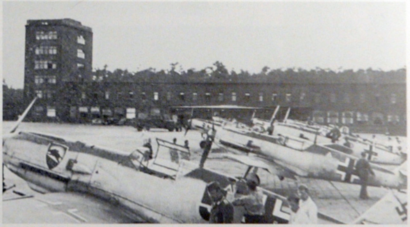
BELOW: Lt. Karl-Heinz Leesmann of 2./JG 52 poses with his Bf 109 E at Speyer in April or May 1940. Around this time, I./JG 52 adopted the 'running boar' badge which was painted on both sides of the engine cowling. Leesmann was awarded the Ritterkreuz in July 1941 when commanding III./JG 52.



BELOW: Bf 109 E-3s of I./JG 52 parked at Mannheim-Sandhofen in April 1940. All the aircraft are camouflaged in the standard factory finish of the the time of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The nearest aircraft is coded 'Red 5' of the 2. Staffel with 'Yellow 5' of the 3. Staffel next one along. It appears that only the aircraft of the 2. Staffel have the 'running boar' badge painted on the nose. 'Yellow 5' also has yellow gun troughs.

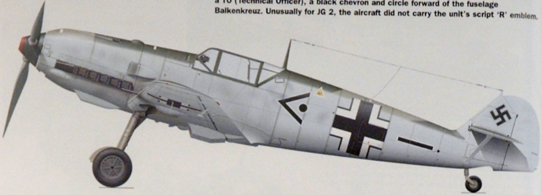


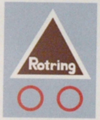
I./JG 52
'running boar' emblem
(variant as shown in
photograph above)



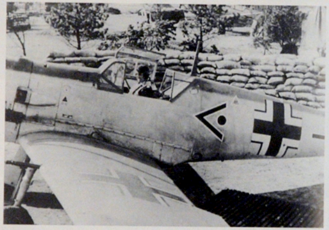
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 flown by Oberleutnant Günther Dommaschk, Gruppen TO of Stab II./JG 2, April 1940

This aircraft carried the standard fighter camouflage for the period with the symbol of a TO (Technical Officer), a black chevron and circle forward of the fuselage Balkenkreuz. Unusually for JG 2, the aircraft did not carry the unit's script 'R' emblem.





Oil filler detail



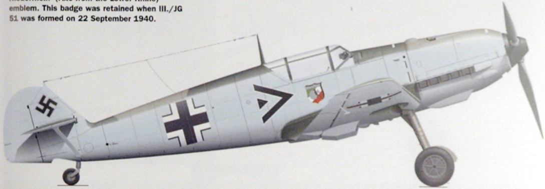
ABOVE: Taken on 11 April 1940, Lt. Günther Dommaschk, the TO (Technical Officer) of Stab II./JG 2 is seated in the cockpit of his Bf 109 E-3. The paintwork indicates that the aircraft had been repainted, as the original dark-greens (RLM 70 & 71) are beginning to bleed through the surface giving a well worn appearance.

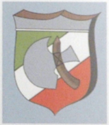
LEFT: Taken in April 1940 at München-Gladbach (now known as Mönchengladbach), this photo shows three pilots of III./JG 54 just after being awarded with the Iron Cross Second Class surrounded by their comrades. Third from left is Uffz. Volz, in the middle is Lt. Friedrich-Wilhelm Behrens, with, second from the right Lt. Max-Hellmuth Ostermann and Lt. Max Clerico. Ostermann, who was posted to 7./JG 54 in April 1940 after having participating in operations over Poland with the I./ZG 1, would later be awarded the Oak Leaves and Swords.

RIGHT: The Gruppenkommandeur of I./JG 20, Hptm. Hannes Trautloft poses in front of his Bf 109 E-1 at Bönninghardt airfield in April 1940. Trautloft took over command of I./JG 20 from Major Siegfried Lehmann on 19 September 1939.

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 flown by Hptm. Hannes Trautloft, Kommandeur of I./JG 20, Bönninghardt, April 1940

Trautloft's aircraft carried the double chevron of a Gruppenkommandeur and the 'Axt vom Niederrhein' (Axe from the Lower Rhine) emblem. This badge was retained when III./JG 51 was formed on 22 September 1940.

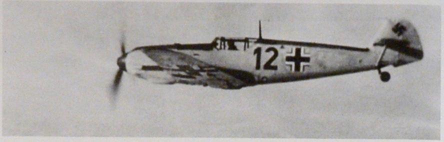




Emblem of I./JG 20
later III./JG 51
'Axt vom Niederrhein'
(Axe from the Lower Rhine)

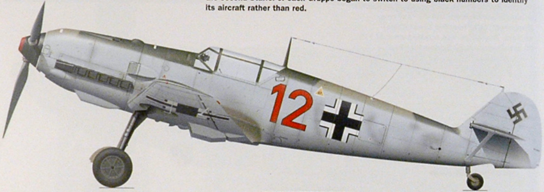
LEFT: Another view of Hptm. Hannes Trautloft's Bf 109 E-1 parked beneath camouflage netting at Bönninghardt airfield in April 1940. Note the absence of the III. Gruppe badge on this side of the fuselage.

RIGHT: Relatively few operational in-flight photographs of Bf 109 E-1s are available for this period. This shows an aircraft, 'Red 12' of 2./JG 20 over the Berlin area. This Staffel was later redesignated 8./JG 51.

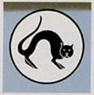


Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 2./JG 20, Berlin-Döberitz, March 1940

Although carrying the later style fuselage Balkenkreuz with wide white angles, this aircraft still had the Hakenkreuz painted across both fin and rudder. Around this period, the second Staffel of each Gruppe began to switch to using black numbers to identify its aircraft rather than red.



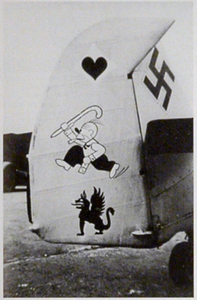
ABOVE: On 22 March 1940, Lt. Harald Jung of I./JG 20 claimed the Gruppe's first victory when he shot down a Spitfire piloted by Plt. Off. C.M. Wheatley who was killed, his parachute failing to open. Jung is pictured here standing beside the tail of his Bf 109 E, W.Nr. 3493 at Bönninghardt after receiving the Iron Cross. Note the single white victory bar.



Emblem of 2./JG 20

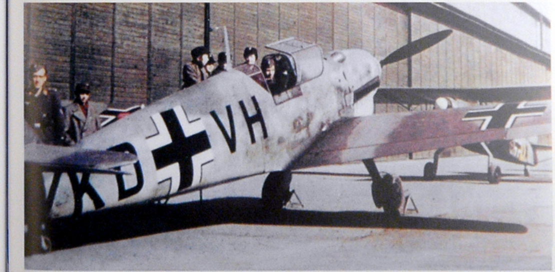
BELOW: A line-up of Bf 109 E-3s of 2./JG 20 under camouflage netting after their move to Bönninghardt airfield in March 1940. All the aircraft had the standard factory finish of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The spinners are finished black-green (RLM 70) with red tips.

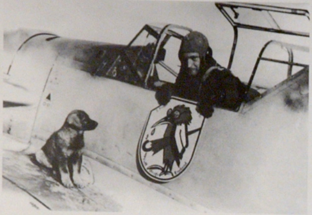
BELOW: The rudder of the Bf 109 E flown by the Gruppenkommandeur of III./JG 26, probably Major Ernst von Berg, bore the badges of the seventh, eighth and ninth Staffeln. Von Berg claimed his first victory on 11 May 1940, a French Curtiss Hawk 75A. Note the red trim tab on the rudder.



ABOVE: A line-up comprising a mixture of brand new Bf 109 E-1s and E-3s stand in a perfect row outside the assembly plant in Augsburg awaiting delivery. The Luftwaffe personnel are looking over the aircraft prior to acceptance to their front line unit. The aircraft still have their basic primer colour on the uppersurfaces and fuselage sides. No unit markings have as yet been applied.

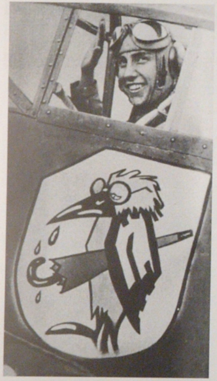
BELOW: As the front line units began to receive newer equipment, so the older aircraft were relegated to training schools or used as hacks by senior officers. Here a Bf 109 B or C with a Jumo 210 engine has been repainted in the standard colours of early 1940 and still retains its radio call sign of KD+VH. The Fw 56 in the distance has a yellow fuselage band, common to flying school aircraft. A group of 'Hitlerjugend' (Hitler youth) are standing on the wing being shown the cockpit instrumentation and controls.

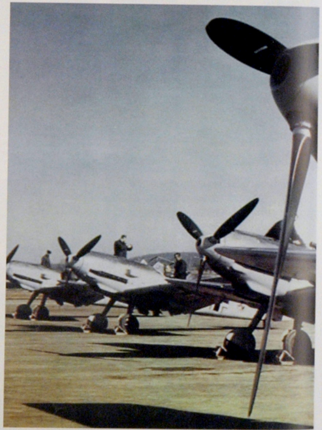




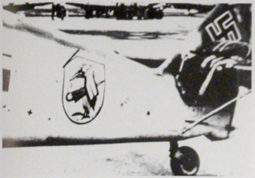
LEFT: A pilot from II./JG 51 holds a template for the emblem of his unit below the cockpit of his Bf 109. This unit evolved from I./JG 71 in October 1939.

BELOW: A line-up of Bf 109 E-1s of 4./JG 51 in the standard early 1940 camouflage of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The 'weeping raven' badge can just be seen on the rear of the fuselage of the second Bf 109 with the spinners being painted white indicating the 4. Staffel.



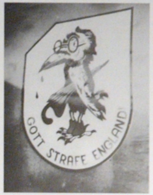


ABOVE: A pilot in his Bf 109 E-1 of I./JG 71 showing the 'weeping raven' badge under the cockpit, a common position for the late 1939 period, before the unit was redesignated II./JG 51. Note that the inscription 'Gott Strafe England!' (God punishes England!) had not been applied at this time and the actual bird painting was retained quite accurately although the body feathers were sometimes painted a different colour.

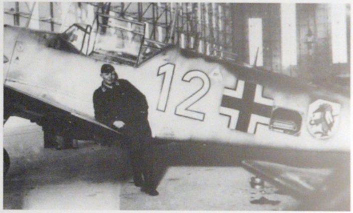


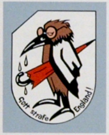
RIGHT: This 'weeping raven' badge painted on the rear fuselage of a Bf 109 E of 4./JG 51 has had a large amount of artistic license applied to it when compared to the standard template.

LEFT: The 'weeping raven' badge of 4./JG 51 in the position normally occupied by the Gruppe symbol.



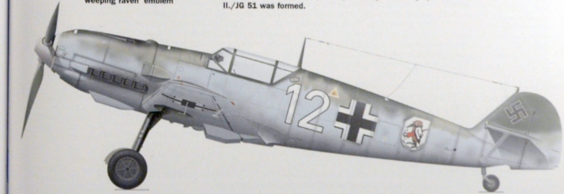
RIGHT: A mechanic relaxes on the wing of a Bf 109 E-3, coded 'White 12' (outlined in black) of 4./JG 51 probably at Böblingen in April 1940. The 'weeping raven' emblem of II./JG 51 was probably a reference to the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain. It was painted on the rear fuselage in place of the normal second Gruppe bar when the emblem was adopted by 4./JG 51. The motto 'Gott strafe England!' ('God punishes England!') was also added.




Gott strafe England!

II./JG 51
'weeping raven' emblem

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 4./JG 51 based at Böblingen in April 1940
The badge, which often incorporated the motto 'Gott strafe England!' ('God punishes England!'), was previously carried by I./JG 71 from which II./JG 51 was formed.



The Invasion of Norway

As early as October 1939, Admiral Erich Raeder had warned Adolf Hitler of the consequences of a possible British occupation of Norway. Such an event would deny the use of Norwegian waters to German ships, would provide the RAF with bases from which to bomb northern Germany, and allow the Royal Navy to dominate the Baltic. In addition, the ice-free port of Narvik through which much of Germany's requirements for Swedish iron ore were sent in winter, would be unavailable. Despite a fear that the German Navy might be decimated in such an operation, Hitler still felt that it would be worth the risk. Although Raeder had not mentioned Denmark in his warning, Hitler had little compunction in ordering this country occupied at the same time as Norway.

In December 1939, Hitler issued the first instructions for a German operation against Norway to be studied, ordering the establishment of a small planning staff on 27 January 1940. A further impetus was given to the plan when Soviet forces under Marshall Semjon Timoshenko opened a second front against Finland on 1 February, but Hitler's hand was finally forced when a Royal Naval destroyer intercepted the German supply ship *Altmark* with 299 British POWs on board in Norwegian territorial waters fifteen days later. This was the clearest evidence yet that the Norwegians were powerless to prevent either Britain or Germany intervening at will in Norwegian waters.

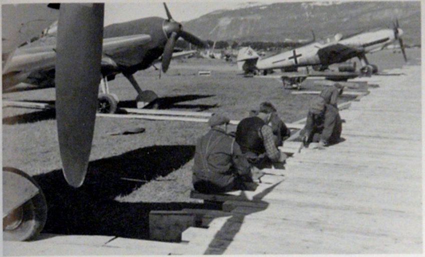
On 1 March 1940, Hitler signed the directive for the completion of the invasion of Norway and Denmark under the code name *'Weserübung'* (Exercise Weser). General Nikolaus von Falkenhorst was appointed to command the operation and the forces placed at his disposal included two Army Corps, two Mountain Divisions, seven Infantry Divisions, a *Luftwaffe* Corps *(X. Fliegerkorps)* and a large number of warships. Göring was extremely unhappy about committing his air forces to the campaign and refused to subordinate his squadrons to the army under von Falkenhorst. Eventually *General* Erhard Milch commanded *Luftwaffe* operations against Norway and Denmark, operational command being subordinated to the X. *Fliegerkorps* under *Generalleutnant* Hans Geissler. By early April 1940, Geissler's force comprised the He 111s of KG 4, KG 26 and KGr 100, the Ju 88s of KG 30, the Ju 87s of I./St.G 1, the Bf 110s of I./ZG 1 and I./ZG 76 and the Bf 109 Es of II./JG 77 plus a number of reconnaissance and transport aircraft.

Against this large and modern force, the tiny Danish Air Force could only put up a few ancient Hawker Nimrod single-seat fighters while the Norwegians had a small number of Gloster Gladiator fighters, Fokker C.V reconnaissance aircraft, Heinkel He 115 floatplanes and some modern Caproni Ca 310 light bombers.

Originally *Weserübung* was scheduled to begin on 20 March 1940, but this was put back to 9 April. Air operations began at 06.00 hours when 9./KG 4 attacked coastal guns outside Bergen and shortly afterwards KG 26 bombed forts off Kristiansand. Other forts in the Oslo fjords were then bombed by KG 4, KGr 100 and I./St.G 1 with further aircraft being alerted for a possible attack on Aalborg. The first Ju 52/3ms landed at Oslo airfield at 08.30 hours, their progress being hampered by fog. In Denmark, I./ZG 1 attacked Værløse airfield, destroying eleven aircraft on the ground and damaging a further fourteen. The airfields at Esbjerg and Oksboel were taken by the *Luftwaffe Regiment* Hermann Göring under the protection of II./JG 77. This unit then landed at Aalborg airfield. These two actions virtually eliminated the tiny Royal Danish Air Force with the result that the country capitulated on the first day. The Royal Norwegian Air Force was able to put up a little more resistance, the seven Gladiators based at Oslo-Fornebu managing to destroy four German aircraft and damaging several more for the loss of one of their number. Sadly for the Norwegian pilots, Fornebu was by then in German hands and the aircraft had to make force landings because no emergency fields had been prepared.

On 12 April, II./JG 77 flew a major action against twelve RAF Hampden bombers attempting to bomb a German warship off Kristiansand. With no defence against beam attack, six of the bombers were "... hacked down from the wing man inwards". II./JG 77, however, lost five Bf 109 Es with four pilots killed. Most subsequent operations by the *Luftwaffe* were flown by the bombers of KG 4, KG 26, KG 30 and KGr 100 and the destroyers of I./ZG 1 and I./ZG 76 against the Royal Navy, the comparatively short range of the Bf 109 Es of II./JG 77 restricting their activities during the campaign. On 11 April, the unit moved to Kristiansand in southern Norway and then to Stavanger. It remained in Norway for some months after the conclusion of the campaign, moving to Trondheim/Vaernes before leaving the country in November and transferring to France. During its time in Norway, the *Gruppe* accounted for many RAF Hudsons, Blenheims, Beauforts and Skuas some of its highest scorers being *Ofw.* Erwin Sawallisch, *Fw.* Robert Menge and *Ofw.* Werner Petermann.

ABOVE: German troops board a former Lufthansa Ju 90, now belonging to KG.z.b.V 107, at Neumünster, on their way to Norway on 9 April 1940.



LEFT: Bf 109 E-1s of II./JG 77 stand parked on a Norwegian airfield. In the distance is the Gruppen-Adjutant's aircraft with a single chevron and II. Gruppe horizontal bar. The machine is camouflaged in the 1940 standard splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides. The rear part of the spinner is black green (RLM 70) with the front in white. Local carpenters are constructing a timber runway and parking area. The nose of the Bf 109 in the centre has the cowling covered except for the spinner which appears to be red but for the small rear portion which is black green.

"Preparations were pathetic!"

Georg Schirmböck

"I was born on 18 August 1918 at Regensburg and I enlisted in the *Luftwaffe* at the end of 1936. In July 1938, despite our training not being completed, a third of our section *(Lehrgang)* at the *Lutfkriegsschule* Dresden/Klotzsche was abruptly transferred to an active unit. The newly created *Jagdgeschwadern* needed personnel to complete their formation and would use us 'greenhorns'. Therefore, still a *Fähnrich*, I was sent to Jever to join the I./JG 136. This unit was already equipped with Bf 109 Bs, but before flying this type, we trained on the Bf 108. Then, having "got our hands" on the 108 and later the 109, we began formation flying (using the *'Kette'* of three which was still in use), shooting at ground targets or balloons and, more rarely, we flew some aerobatic manoeuvres. At the end of the year we moved to Fürth and Weiden, then to the south-east of Germany, where we were placed on alert. It was the time of the 'Sudeten crisis'. At that time, our *Gruppe* was renamed II./JG 333. We were transferred to Eger and Pilsen after the successive occupations of the Sudetenland and Bohemia and Moravia. In May 1939, our unit received its definitive designation, II./JG 77.

Two months later (at which time we were equipped with Bf 109 *'Emils'*) we were moved back to the German Bight, despite the fact that the invasion of Poland was to begin shortly. After the outbreak of war, our *Gruppe* was involved in the first victorious actions against the RAF on 4 September 1939. Following a short stay in the Bonn area, we were transferred back to Jever (except for the fifth *Staffel* which was at Wangerooge). It was operating from here that we encountered the RAF again, firstly on 14 December and then on the 18th. On that day, I claimed a Wellington.

Our unit was the only *Jagdgruppe* involved in the invasion of Denmark and Norway in April 1940, probably because or our 'coastal origins'. Our preparations for this operation were pathetic! We were only briefed a few hours before the action and we had no maps. We (the pilots of 4./JG 77) were merely ordered to land and stay at Esbjerg, which we did. Both our other *Staffeln* went to Aalborg with the same instructions. All three *Staffeln* then moved to Oslo-Fornebu and finally to Kristiansand where we encountered (for the very first time in our flying career) an artificial airstrip. In spite of this discovery and the difficult windy conditions, the whole *Gruppe* managed to land without damage.

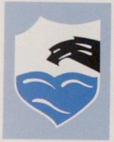
On 30 April 1940, I scrambled with a wingman to intercept what was described as "British aircraft flying in our direction at an altitude of 4,000 m". In fact, our ground radio guidance was often wrong, and such was the case that day. The bombers we were trying to intercept were flying very low en route to attack our airfield at Stavanger. So, flying about 3,500 m above, we missed them but another *Rotte*, including my friend, *Lt.* Heinz Demes, just had time to take off before the bombing began. *Ofw.* Sawallisch then shot down a Wellington but *Lt.* Demes was hit by return fire and crashed into the sea.

On 1 May 1940, I gained my second victory, a Hudson which was part of a large formation attacking our airfield at Stavanger. I fired a huge amount of ammunition before 'my' bomber finally went down. Hudsons were enormous, like airliners. My third victory was also against a Hudson, on 11 June.

After these operations, our time in Norway became quieter, our principal activity being coastal patrols. When we took off to intercept British formations, we were usually warned too late by our radio guidance so, on rare occasions, we had just had time to see an aircraft disappearing in the far distance."

Members of 4./JG 77 receiving decorations from Hptm. Karl Hentschel with Oblt. Horst Carganico looking on, at Mandal during the summer of 1940. From left to right are: Lt. Georg Schirmböck, Ofw. Jakob Annoldy, Fw. Erwin Sawallisch, Oblt. Helmut Henz, Fw. Harbach, Uffz. Ludwig Fröba and Fw. Brinkmann a member of the ground crew.

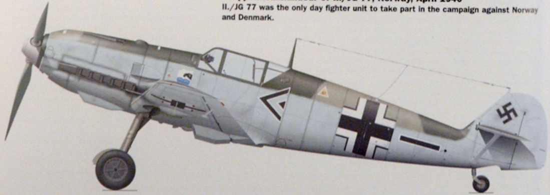
LEFT AND BELOW: Ground personnel pose with the Bf 109 E-3 piloted by the Gruppenkommandeur of II./JG 77, Major Harry von Bülow at Kristiansand in southern Norway, around 13 April 1940. Despite what has been published previously, von Bülow led the Gruppe in the first days of Weserübung although he had officially left the unit in March. On 11 April, the Gruppe left Aalborg airfield in Denmark where it was based from 9 April, and transferred to Kristiansand in southern Norway. Note the cover over the engine air filter. See Jagdwaffe Section 3 'Blitzkrieg and Sitzkrieg' page 288 for more photos of this machine taken during the cold weather around February 1940. The badge of II./JG 77 represented an eagle flying over the sea.

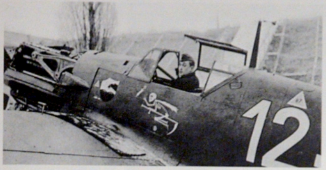


The 'Seeadler' emblem of II./JG 77 adopted from early 1940

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 flown by Major Harry von Bülow, Gruppenkommandeur of II./JG 77, Norway, April 1940

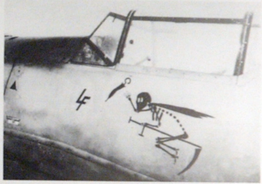
II./JG 77 was the only day fighter unit to take part in the campaign against Norway and Denmark.



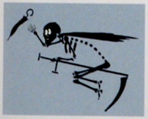


LEFT: This Bf 109 E-1 or E-3 'White 12' of 4./JG 77 shows the 'skeleton on a scythe' emblem painted in white under the cockpit and also carries the II./JG 77 emblem. The aircraft appears to still have the late 1939 camouflage of dark green (RLM 71) on the uppersurfaces and fuselage sides and a square cockpit canopy mainly associated with the E-3 and later variants. The photo appears to have been taken during the winter as there is no foliage on the distant tree.

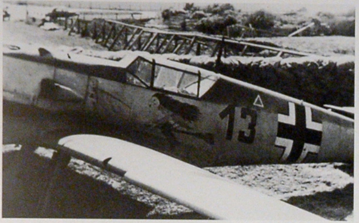
RIGHT AND BELOW: Possibly photos of the same aircraft taken at different times. Oblt. Helmut Henz, Staffelkapitän of 4./JG 77 photographed in the cockpit of his Bf 109 E, coded 'White 12', at Stavanger. On 30 April, Henz claimed his third victory over a Bristol Blenheim. Note the Staffel emblem, as well as the initials 'LF', possibly of his girlfriend, although the photo below shows a slight modification with the addition of a line, possibly in red, painted around the L and F



BELOW: Lt. Hans Demes of 4./JG 77 is congratulated after having made his first claim, a Blenheim shot down over the North Sea on 27 March 1940. At this time the unit was based on the North Sea island of Westerland near the Danish coast. The Bf 109 E in the background was coded 'White 11' and carries both the Staffel badge (a skeleton on a scythe) and the II. Gruppe emblem a 'Seeadler'. The significance of the small capital letter 'K' near the oil filler cap is not known.

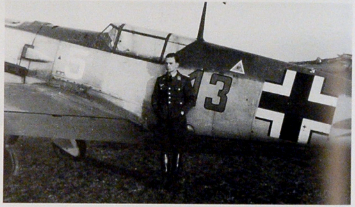


4. /JG 77 emblem 'skeleton on a scythe' catching Neville Chamberlain's umbrella



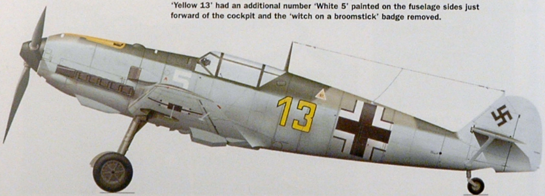
LEFT: This Bf 109 E-1 is coded 'Yellow 13' and carries the 'witch on a broomstick' emblem used by 6.(J)/Tr. Gr. 186. This aircraft was flown by Ofw. Kurt Ubben who was later awarded the Ritterkreuz with Oak Leaves. See Section 3 page 279 for more photos and colour information of this Staffel. In common with other Bf 109s at this time the aircraft of II.(J)/Tr.Gr.186 were camouflaged in the standard factory finish of the the time of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath

RIGHT: Ofw. Kurt Ubben poses in front of the same Bf 109 E-1 shown above, coded 'White 5 and Yellow 13' of 6.(J)/Tr. Gr.186, probably in Oslo during April 1940. The unit was originally formed to operate Bf 109s from the aircraft carrier Graf Zeppelin which was never completed. It is perhaps not so well known that a second carrier was also laid down named the 'Peter Strasser' after a famous Zeppelin captain. At this time the 6. Staffel aircraft were partially re-painted, the 6. Staffel badge of the 'witch on a broomstick' was removed and another set of identification numbers were allocated. This additional 'White' number was positioned just forward of the cockpit. The photo shows considerable deterioration and staining of the original paintwork. The tops of the factory code letters 'NM' are just visible above the number '13'. Note also the yellow (RLM 04) gun troughs.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 flown by Ofw. Kurt Ubben of 6.(J)/Tr.Gr. 186, April 1940

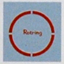
'Yellow 13' had an additional number 'White 5' painted on the fuselage sides just forward of the cockpit and the 'witch on a broomstick' badge removed.



ABOVE: A Bf 109 E-1 of 6.(J)/Tr.Gr. 186 photographed at Trondheim/ Vaernes airfield around 10 April 1940. At this time some aircraft had the witch on a broomstick emblem of the 6. Staffel painted over and another individual number applied in 'White'. The Bf 109 E-1 above carried the additional number 'White 4' as well as the original 'Yellow 11'. Note the Ju 52s and He 111 in the background.

BELOW: Another view of 'White 3 and Yellow 11' with a number of Bf 110s possibly of ZG 76 in the background. The airfield at Trondheim/ Vaernes did not offer much protection for the aircraft but the danger of enemy action was remote.

ABOVE: Pilots of 6.(J)/Tr.Gr. 186 being awarded the Iron Cross Second Class at Trondheim/Vaernes, with a Bf 109 E, carrying the two codes 'White 3' and 'Yellow 11'. However there appears to be an anomaly here, as both 'White 4' in the top picture and 'White 3' above and left, both carried the number 'Yellow 11'. Ofw. Kurt Ubben opposite, retained 'Yellow 13' with the new number 'White 5'. All the aircraft have the early 1940 factory finish of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath.

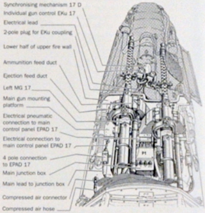


Alternative oil filler marking

RIGHT: Hptm. Walter Kienzle, Staffelkapitän of 4.(J)/Tr.Gr. 186 talks with officers of the Gebirgsjägern (German army mountain troops), probably near Oslo in June 1940. This Bf 109 E-1 had a white number '2' below the cockpit but unfortunately the fuselage number is obscured. On 2 June 1940, the rest of II.(J)/Tr.Gr. 186 was sent to Norway in order to strengthen local defences after many units had been called back to the West.

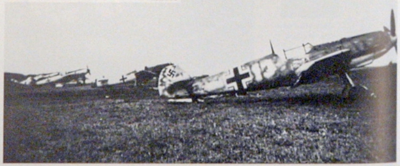
RIGHT: On the left of this picture taken in Kristiansand, is another personality who was attached to the Stab of II./JG 77, Hptm. Winfried Müller-Rienzburg. He had been an officer in the Austrian Air Force and joined the Luftwaffe after the Anschluss. He was Kommandeur of I./JG 76 during 1938 and 1939 and was also attached to the RLM, in an educational unit for a few months, before joining the Stab II./JG 77 in April 1940. In August he was transferred to Stab JG 26 and eventually became a POW in Crete on 20 May 1941.

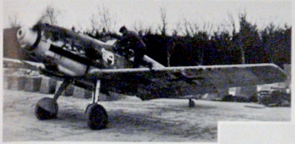
BELOW: Armourers load the ammunition boxes for the engine-mounted MG 17 machine guns on this Bf 109 E. Note the removed area of cowling giving access to the guns and ammunition storage area with each MG 17 having 1,000 rounds per gun. In the Bf 109 E-1, each wing-mounted MG 17 carried 1,000 rounds and in the Bf 109 E-3 each 20 mm wing mounted MG FF had 120 rounds.


Synchronising mechanism 17 D
Individual gun control EKu 17
Electrical lead
2-pole plug for EKu coupling
Lower half of upper fire wall
Ammunition feed duct
Ejection feed duct
Left MG 17
Main gun mounting platform
Electrical pneumatic connection to main control panel EPAD 17
Electrical connection to main control panel EPAD 17
4 pole connection to EPAD 17
Main junction box
Main lead to junction box
Compressed air connector
Compressed air hose
P1

Installation of engine-mounted MG 17s on Bf 109 D and E

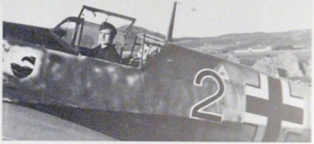
RIGHT: Seen here at Herdla during the summer of 1940, the Bf 109 E in the foreground, coded 'White 13' was piloted by Oblt. Helmut Henz, Staffelkapitän of 4./JG 77. Although a grey and green mottled finish had been applied to the fuselage side of Henz's aircraft this finish was still only in limited use. The machines in the background still carry the standard early 1940 scheme with the Hakenkreuz still in the earlier position, across the fin and rudder.

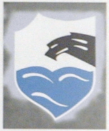




LEFT: During the late Spring of 1940, the pale blue fuselage sides of the Bf 109 Es of 5./JG 77 were being oversprayed with dark green (RLM 71) in order to make them less conspicuous at their dispersals. This aircraft was photographed at Trondheim/Vaernes. It could be a Bf 109T and appears to have the undersides of the wing tips painted yellow (RLM 04). The spinner is divided into colours of black-green (RLM 70) at the rear, a white centre with the front portion in yellow (RLM 04)

RIGHT: Showing the same aircraft as shown above, a mechanic (Wart) is seated in the cockpit of this Bf 109 E-3 (or possibly T) coded 'Black 2' at Trondheim/Vaernes during Spring 1940. Although the 'Zylinderhut' (top hat) Staffel emblem has been oversprayed it can still be fairly seen bleeding through the new dark green mottle (RLM 71) that has been applied to the fuselage sides. The aircraft still carries the 'Seeadler' badge of the second Gruppe and the hastily applied side camouflage has been painted around the emblem.

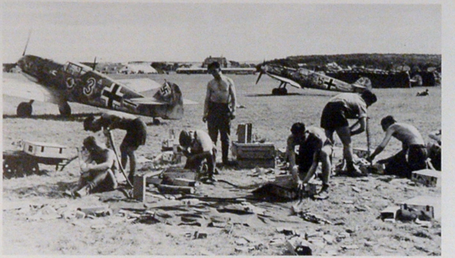




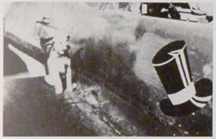
II./JG 77 'Seeadler' emblem

ABOVE: Pilots of 5./JG 77 including Fw. Rudolf Schmidt and Fw. Robert Menge, at readiness (Bereitschaft) at Trondheim/Vaernes during late Spring 1940.

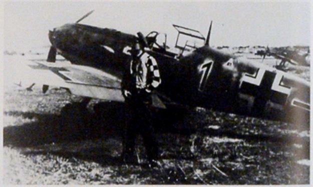
RIGHT: A Bf 109 E-3 of 5./JG 77 comes in to land at Trondheim/Vaernes during the summer of 1940.



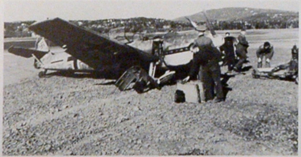
ABOVE: Armourers from 5./JG 77 at work in front of two of the Staffel's Bf 109 Es, 'Black 3' and 'Black 5', at Trondheim/Vaernes during August 1940. Note that the aircraft carry the 'Zylinderhut' (top hat) emblem introduced by the Staffelkapitän, Hptm. Alfred von Lojewski. Here again, the mottle camouflage has been carefully painted around all the markings on the aircraft.



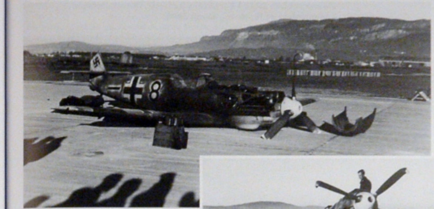
ABOVE: Close up of the 'Zylinderhut' (top hat) carried on the fuselage sides of the Bf 109 Es of 5./JG 77. This emblem was first used in Spain, becoming a familiar sight on the Bf 109s of 2.J/88. As the last Staffelkapitän of 2.J/88, Hptm. Alfred von Lojewski, transferred the emblem to 5./JG 77 when he took over the Staffel.

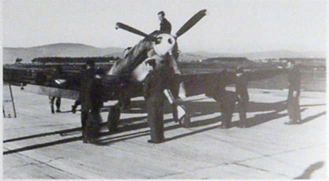


ABOVE: Fw. Robert Menge, wearing a pullover made by his girlfriend, poses in front of his Bf 109 E coded 'Black 1' of 5./JG 77 at Aalborg in Denmark, possibly on 14 August 1940. The Staffel moved to Aalborg on 12 August, being involved in a major operation against RAF Blenheims the next day. Menge shot down four Blenheims (from a total of 15), these being his 10th to 13th claims. The mottle has again been applied around all the markings.

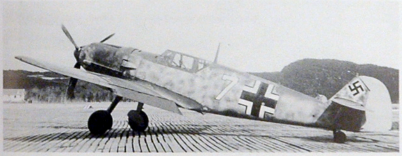


LEFT: On 26 September 1940 the engine of the Bf 109 E-3, W.Nr.0833, caught fire on take off from Oslo-Fornebu. The pilot, Gefr. Rudolf Schmidt, managed to bring the aircraft to a halt, but the undercarriage collapsed and it was badly damaged. Schmidt himself was injured.



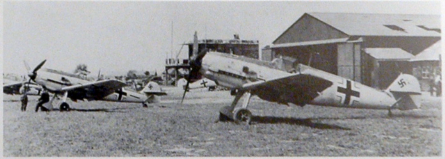


ABOVE AND RIGHT: Following engine trouble, Gefr. Heinrich Brunsmann of 5./JG 77 was forced to make an emergency landing on the wooden strip at Oslo-Fornebu airfield. His aircraft, a Bf 109 E-3, coded 'Black 8', W.Nr 5011 was 10% damaged but the pilot was unhurt. The photo on the right shows the aircraft after it had been put back on its undercarriage.



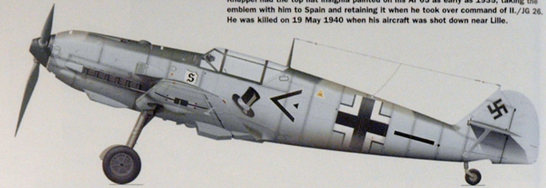
LEFT: This Bf 109 E-3 probably belonging to 3./JG 77, stands on a timber boarded runway. As timber was a readily available construction material in Scandinavia, it was used to make hardstandings and runways for aircraft. This machine appears to have received a new rudder and the mottling on the fuselage has been applied much less heavily except for the nose.

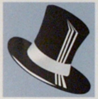
RIGHT: In the spring of 1940, these Bf 109 E-3s of the Stab I./JG 77 were stationed on Aalborg airfield in Denmark. The aircraft nearest the camera carries the single chevron of the Adjutant, Oblt. Herbert Kunze. It also carried the Gruppe badge 'old boot' on the cowling. Note also the yellow gun troughs.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 piloted by Hptm. Herwig Knüppel, Kommandeur of II./JG 26, March 1940

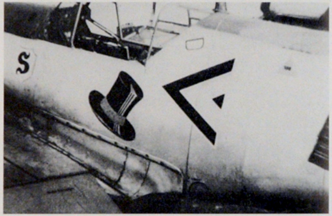
Knüppel had the top hat insignia painted on his Ar 65 as early as 1935, taking the emblem with him to Spain and retaining it when he took over command of II./JG 26. He was killed on 19 May 1940 when his aircraft was shot down near Lille.



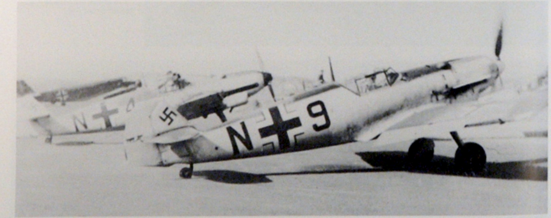


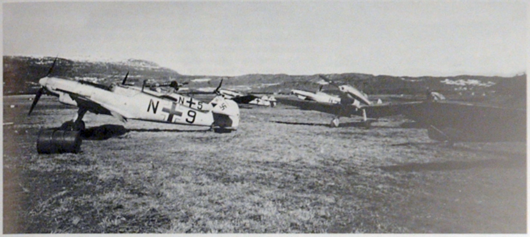
Herwig Knüppel's 'top hat' badge

RIGHT: A close-up of Hptm. Herwig Knüppel's Bf 109 E-3 when Kommandeur of II./JG 26 showing the 'top hat' and Geschwader emblem. Note the yellow octane triangle showing '100' octane.

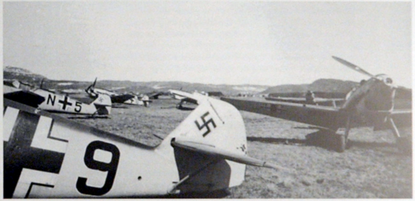


BELOW: In the foreground is Bf 109 D-1 W.Nr. 2079 coded 'Black N+9' with '4' behind, belonging to 11.(N)/JG 2 operating out of Trondheim-Vaernes in Norway.



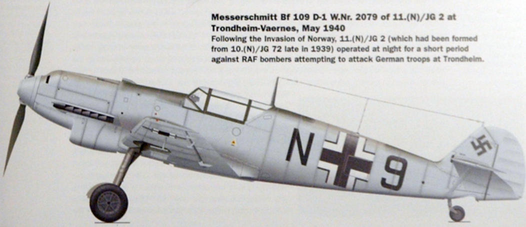


ABOVE AND RIGHT: These Bf 109 D-1s were assigned to 11.(N)/JG 2 and operated out of Trondheim-Vaernes in Norway. The unit had been formed from 10./(N)/JG 72 in late 1939 and was used for night operations against RAF bombers in the Spring of 1940. These aircraft were re-painted in the new standard splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 D-1 W.Nr. 2079 of 11.(N)/JG 2 at Trondheim-Vaernes, May 1940

Following the Invasion of Norway, 11.(N)/JG 2 (which had been formed from 10.(N)/JG 72 late in 1939) operated at night for a short period against RAF bombers attempting to attack German troops at Trondheim.



The Invasion of France

MAY 1940

Early in the morning of 10 May 1940 nearly 4,000 German warplanes, including 1,016 single-engined fighters, swept suddenly across France, Belgium and Holland. The *Luftwaffe's* main objectives were to wreck enemy air bases and facilities, destroying as many aircraft on the ground as possible and to support the advancing tanks and infantry. At dawn, the German *Kampfgruppen* attacked 47 French, 15 Belgian and 10 Dutch airfields and claimed up to 800 aircraft destroyed. This proved a wild exaggeration; in fact in the French Northern Army Zone, only four aircraft were destroyed beyond repair and 30 damaged. In the Eastern Army area, 16 aircraft were destroyed and 10 damaged. The total losses suffered by the Allies, in the air and on the ground, was about 210 aircraft.

Some of the most effective operations against the Germans were probably carried out by the Royal Netherlands Air Force. The task of neutralising the Dutch air forces had been put in the hands of KG 4 under *Oberst* Martin Fiebig but the unit was to lose 11 bombers and Fiebig himself was taken prisoner. The only real German successes were at Amsterdam and Den Haag (The Hague) where I./KG 4 destroyed 21 fighters. The escorting German fighters, from JG 26 and ZG 26 claimed 8 and 17 Dutch aircraft shot down respectively, but in return the Fokker D.XXIs and G.Is of the *Luchtvaartafdeling* shot down 21 *Luftwaffe* aircraft. Around Den Haag and Rotterdam, Dutch anti-aircraft fire and artillery destroyed well over 120 Ju 52 transports attempting to land troops to support earlier German parachute landings. Kesselring signalled to Göring: "As far as we can ascertain the 22nd Airborne Division operations are a near failure" Kesselring also lost contact with *General Graf* von Sponeck leading operations against Den Haag and *Lt.* Wolfgang Ludewig from 9./JG 26 was ordered to Ypenburg to try and contact him. After two attempts to land, Ludewig's aircraft made a force landing and he was taken prisoner. Dutch sources also record the destruction of two Bf 109s from II.(J)/*Trägergruppe* 186, one by fighters near Den Helder and another by machine-gun fire at Borkum.

ABOVE: This Fokker G.1 was destroyed on the ground during the early phase of the German attack on the Low Countries.

The story was very different in Belgium however where Bf 109s shot down three out of the nine Fairey Battle fighters that had managed to intercept the *Luftwaffe*, and effectively reduced the others to scrap. Three Belgian fighter squadrons that were assembled at Schaffen were quickly destroyed and, of the remaining four that tried to transfer to Brusthem, three were decimated.

The German attack on French airfields did not prove very successful, mainly because of poor reconnaissance and intelligence. Of the total of 91 operational airfields in northern France, only 31 were attacked and 13 out of 18 bomber bases were left unscathed. This meant that the Allies were able to react strongly against the second wave of *Luftwaffe* attacks, destroying 39 bombers and three fighters for the loss of 19 aircraft, twelve of them French. The *Armée de l'Air* lost a total of 65 aircraft, many of them MS 406s from two fighter groups, GC III/2 and GC II/7, which were virtually wiped out. At the end of the day the *Luftwaffe* had destroyed 56 British and French aircraft in the air, but had lost 128.

Next day, two German armoured thrusts were developing, one aimed through the Ardennes, the other further north through Maastricht and south of Brussels. To support these, the *Luftwaffe* again struck at British and French airfields, virtually destroying one RAF Blenheim Squadron on the ground. Twelve LeO 451s from GB I/12 and II/12 escorted by 18 MS 406s from GC II/6 attacked targets in the Albert Canal area. They, and a second attack in the afternoon were intercepted by Bf 109s and suffered badly. JG 26 flew fighter sweeps and came across several large formations of Allied fighters. III./JG 26 encountered the Hawk 75s of GC I/4 escorting a French column on the Antwerp-Breda road and claimed five French fighters without loss, *Lt.* Joachim Müncheberg and *Oblt.* Georg Beyer among the successful pilots. 2./JG 26 encountered MS 406s in the Antwerp area, claiming one, but losing *Fw.* Gerhard Herzog. Other elements of JG 26, including the 5. *Staffel* engaged Dutch fighters near the Zuider Zee.

BELOW: This burnt out French Potez is being inspected by German troops after making a belly landing. The fate of the crew is not known

The 12 May proved one of the most successful for the three component *Gruppen* of JG 27 – I./JG 27, I./JG 1 and I./JG 21 based at München-Gladbach and Köln. Their main task on this day was to protect the bridges over the River Maas and Albert Canal to clear the way for the German 6.Armee. Early in the morning, I./JG 1 intercepted a formation of RAF Blenheims over Maastricht, and shot down six. Three of these were claimed by *Oblt.* Walter Adolf, *Staffelkapitän* of 2./JG 1. A few minutes later the remaining Blenheims were intercepted by 3./JG 27 and two more shot down in flames by *Oblt.* Gerhard Homuth. A little later, five Fairey Battles from No.12 Squadron made a suicidal attack on the Albert Canal bridges but all were shot down by *flak*. During the day, JG 27 flew constant operations with a 45 minute pause between each. Around 11.00 hours *Hptm.* Adolf Galland, JG 27's Operations Officer, shot down three RAF Hurricanes, his first victories. In the afternoon, JG 27 escorted the dive bombers of St.G 2 and St.G 77 attacking enemy columns. The unit flew a total of 340 sorties during the day, the *Geschwader* claiming 28 enemy aircraft for the loss of four. Four Bf 109s from II.(J)/*Trägergruppe* 186 were also lost to Dutch anti-aircraft fire.

ABOVE: The scene at this Belgian airfield gives an excellent comparison of the respective equipment available to Belgium and Germany in 1940. The photograph shows a Bf 109 E of JG 26 parked beside an abandoned Belgian, British-built, Fairey Fox.

On 13 May, German forces broke through the Allied defences at Sedan, and by the following day, the *Panzers* were pouring through the gap.

The II. *Fliegerkorps* described the 14 May as the 'Day of the Fighters', with fighters from both sides being heavily involved around the Sedan area. Probably the most successful German unit was I./JG 53 under *Hptm.* Lothar von Janson, which claimed 39 victories, five of them by *Oblt.* Hans-Karl Mayer. The second *Gruppe* of JG 53 under *Hptm.* Günther von Maltzahn fought off French Morane fighters before wreaking heavy damage on British bombers. Also on this day the highest scoring pilot of III./JG 53, its commander, *Hptm.* Werner Mölders, was shot down by French fighters but survived without injury. Another very successful *Jagdwaffe* unit was JG 2 under *Obstlt.* Harry von Bülow (recently transferred from II./JG 77), although the *Geschwader* lost nine Bf 109s. In total the German fighter effort had totalled 814 sorties with 89 Allied aircraft shot down. Further north, KG 54 heavily bombed Rotterdam, almost obliterating the ancient city and killing over 800 and rendering 80,000 homeless. Next day Holland surrendered to avoid the possibility that the *Luftwaffe* would inflict another strike against Utrecht. On 18 May, the main German spearheads had reached the upper Somme. Five RAF Hurricanes were shot down by Bf 109s from II./JG 26 near Vitry, while two others were destroyed by aircraft from II./JG 2 and 2./JG 51. Next day, *Hptm.* Herwig Knüppel, *Kommandeur* of II./JG 26, was shot down by a French fighter near Lille and killed. Knüppel, it may be remembered, was one of the first six German pilots to arrive in Spain in August 1936 (see *Jagdwaffe* Section 2). *Hptm.* Karl Ebbighausen, *Staffelkapitän* of 4./JG 26, who was injured on the same day near Lille in a force landing following combat, temporarily took his place until the arrival of *Hptm.* Erich Noack on 1 June 1940. The other losses were from 4./JG 26 and 2.(J)/LG 2.

ABOVE: This Fairey Swordfish, L9724, was shot down during night operations in the Dunkirk area during May 1940. The aircraft came from part of the aircraft carrier HMS Glorious strike element which operated from shore bases at the time the carrier was employed ferrying fighter aircraft to Norway.

By 20 May, German *Panzer* Divisions had established a bridgehead over the lower part of the Somme between Amiens and Abbeville. The short range of the single-engined fighters meant that the rapid advance forced them to change bases almost daily. When not engaged in bomber escort the fighters were occupied in ground attack or in sweeps to engage Allied aircraft. On this day, 3./JG 2 claimed a total of eight LeO 45s, including two by *Lt.* Helmut Wick and another by the *Staffelkapitän*, *Hptm.* Hennig Strümpell. Next day *Gruppenkommandeur*, *Hptm.* Dr. Erich Mix of III./JG 2, was shot down, making a successful belly landing near Roye in France. He was slightly injured. During the period 10-21 May, the *Luftwaffe* lost a total of 76 Bf 109s, while the RAF had 215 Hurricanes destroyed and 56 pilots killed.

On 23 May, six Bf 109s from I./JG 1 and I./JG 27 were shot down in combat, with two pilots killed, one injured and another three taken prisoner.

By the following day, the German Army in the north was also closing in on Gent. The British Army Expeditionary Force had now been separated from the French, and a large part of the *Luftwaffe* was assembled to prevent them from rejoining.

BELOW: A crashed Bf 109 E 'Brown 12' (outlined in black) belonging to 6./JG 26 has been dismantled and salvaged for repair by Luftwaffe personnel using a Mercedes truck, after having made a belly landing in France.

RIGHT: French soldiers making their way across the Place Liszt in Paris on their way to the Gare du Nord railway station.

LEFT: Generalmajor Wolfram von Richthofen, left, commander of the VIII Fliegerkorps with General der Flieger Albert Kesselring, head of Luftflotte 2.

ABOVE: This damaged Bf 109 E-3 'Black 2+-' of 5./JG 27 is being made ready for salvage in the vicinity of Lille in Northern France. The aircraft, piloted by Lt. Helmut Ströbl, made a forced landing on 19 May behind French lines, and was able to escape capture until the German army advanced into the area. Ströbl was later killed in the Battle of Britain.

BELOW: Pilots from 8./JG 2 sit ready for action. On the left is Lt. Willinger with, on extreme right, Oblt. Rudolf Mollerfriedrich. The identity of the two pilots in the centre is not known. The Bf 109 E-3 'Black 2' (outlined in white) in the background, was usually flown by Lt. Karlheinz Metz who collided with Fw. Kurt Goltzsch (he later received the Ritterkreuz) over Kent on 6 September and became a PoW. This photo was taken in Beaulieu, near Signy-le-Petit during May 1940 during the early part of the German advance. Note the wavy line Gruppe symbol behind the Balkenkreuz.

Jagdwaffe Order of Battle

10 May 1940

Luftflotte 2	***General der Flieger* Albert Kesselring**	
I.(J)/LG 2 (attached)	Bf 109 E	*Major* Hanns Trübenbach Wyck auf Föhr (one *Staffel* at Esjberg)
II./JG 2 (attached)	Bf 109 E	*Major* Wolfgang Schellmann Nordholz
10. and 12.(N)/JG 2 (attached)	Bf 109 D & Ar 68 F	*Major* Albert Blumensaat Hopsten
VIII Fliegerkorps	***Generalmajor* Wolfram von Richthofen**	
Stab JG 27	Bf 109 E	*Obstlt.* Max Ibel München-Gladbach
I./JG 27	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Helmut Riegel München-Gladbach
I./JG 21 (attached)	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Werner Ultsch München-Gladbach
I./JG 1 (attached)	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Joachim Schlichting Gymnich
Jagdfliegerführer 2	***Oberst* Kurt von Döring**	
Stab JG 26	Bf 109 E	*Major* Hans-Hugo Witt Dortmund
II./JG 26	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Herwig Knüppel Dortmund
III./JG 26	Bf 109 E	*Major* Ernst von Berg Essen-Mulheim
III./JG 3	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Walter Kienitz Hopsten
Stab/JG 51	Bf 109 E	*Oberst* Theo Osterkamp Bönninghardt
I./JG 51	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Hans-Heinrich Brustellin Krefeld
I./JG 26 (attached)	Bf 109 E	*Major* Gotthard Handrick Bönninghardt
I./JG 20 (attached)	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Hannes Trautloft Bönninghardt
II./JG 27	Bf 109 C & E	*Hptm.* Werner Andres Bönninghardt
Jagdfliegerführer Deutsche Bucht		***Obstlt.* Carl Schumacher**
Stab JG 1	Bf 109 E	*Obstlt.* Carl Schumacher Jever
II.(J)/Tr.Gr. 186 (attached)	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Heinrich Seeliger Wangerooge
Luftflotte 3	***General der Flieger* Hugo Sperrle**	
Stab JG 52	Bf 109 E	*Major* Herbert von Bernegg Mannheim-Sandhofen
I./JG 52	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Wolfgang Ewald Lachen/Speyerdorf
II./JG 52	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Hans-Günter von Kornatzki Speyer
Stab JG 54	Bf 109 E	*Major* Martin Mettig Böblingen
I./JG 54	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Hubertus von Bonin Böblingen
I Fliegerkorps	***General der Flieger* Ulrich Grauert**	
Stab JG 77	Bf 109 E	*Obstlt.* von Manteuffel Peppenhoven
I./JG 77	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Johannes Janke Odendorf
I./JG 3 (attached)	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Günther Lützow Vogelsang
Jagdfliegerführer 3	***Oberst* Gerd von Massow**	
Stab JG 2	Bf 109 E	*Obstlt.* Harry von Bülow Frankfurt-Rebstock
I./JG 2	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Jürgen Roth Frankfurt-Rebstock
III./JG 2	Bf 109 E	*Major* Erich Mix Frankfurt-Rebstock
I./JG 76 (attached)	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Alexander Winterer Ober-Ulm
Stab JG 53	Bf 109 E	*Obstlt.* Hans-Jürgen von Cramon-Taubadel Wiesbaden-Erbenheim
I./JG 53	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Lothar von Janson Wiesbaden-Erbenheim
II./JG 53	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Hans-Günther von Maltzahn Wiesbaden-Erbenheim
III./JG 53	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Werner Mölders Wiesbaden-Erbenheim
III./JG 52 (attached)	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Wolf-Heinrich von Houwald Mannheim-Sandhofen
Luftflotte 5	***Generaloberst* Hans-Jürgen Stumpff**	
11.(N)/JG 2	Bf 109 D	unknown Trondheim
II./JG 77	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Karl Hentschel (4./JG 77 at Kristiansand, 5./JG 77 at Stavanger and 6./JG 77 at Trondheim)

Fighter strength/serviceability returns for 11 May 1940

(*Number of aircraft on hand given first, number serviceable in brackets*)

I.(J)/LG 2	Bf 109 E	48	(32)
Stab & I./JG 1	Bf 109 E	50	(40)
Stab, I., II., III. & IV./JG 2	Bf 109 D	54	(42)
	Bf 109 E	127	(???)
Stab, I., II. & III./JG 3	Bf 109 E	132	(107)
I./JG 20	Bf 109 E	48	(41)
I./JG 21	Bf 109 E	48	(47)
Stab, I., II. & III./JG 26	Bf 109 E	144	(125)
Stab, I. & II./JG 27	Bf 109 E	85	(77)
Stab, I. & II./JG 51	Bf 109 E	97	(79)
Stab, I., II. & III./JG 52	Bf 109 E	136	(102)
Stab, I., II. & III./JG 53	Bf 109 E	146	(127)
Stab & I./JG 54	Bf 109 E	48	(33)
I./JG 76	Bf 109 E	44	(43)
Stab & I./JG 77	Bf 109 E	40	(38)
II./JG 77	Bf 109 E	41	(33)Tr.
I.(J)/Tr.Gr. 186	Bf 109 E	48	(34)
Totals		**1336**	**(1000+)**

French Air Force Fighter Units Order of Battle

10 May 1940

Groupement 21		**Chantilly**
GC I/1	MB 152	Chantilly les Aigles
GC II/1	MB 152	Buc
GC III/3	MB 406	Noirent-Fontes
GC II/10	MB 151/152	Rouen Boos
GC III/10	MB 151/152	Le Havre Octeville
Groupement 22		**Verlaines-en-Haye**
GC I/2	MS 406	Toul-Ochey
GC II/4	Hawk 75 A	Xaffévilliers
GC II/5	Hawk 75 A	Toul-Croix de Metz
GC II/6	MS 406	Anglure-Vouarces (re-equipping with the D.520 at the end of the campaign)
GC I/8	MB 152	Verlaine-en-Haye
Groupement 23		**Laon**
GC II/2	MS 406	Laon-Chambry
GC I/5	Hawk 75 A	Suippes
GC III/7	MS 406	Vitry le François
ECMJ 1/16	Potez 631	Wez-Thuisy
Groupement 24		**Dijon**
GC II/7	MS 406	Luxeuil-St Sauveur (lost nine aircraft on 10 May 1940 to Luftwaffe ground attacks, operational again on 1 June with the D.520).
GC III/6	MS 406	Chissey s/-Loue (re-equipped with the D.520, operational on 13 June 1940).
GC I/6	MS 406	Marseille-Marignane (on 17 June)
GC I/3	D.520	Cannes-Mandelieu (first unit to be re-equipped with the D.520, operational 11 May 1940).
GC II/3	MS 406	Le Luc (converting to the D.520, operational at Lognes May 1940).
GC II/9	MS 406	Non-operational, Marseille-Marignane (re-equipping with the MB 152).
GC III/9	MB 151/152	Lyon-Bron
Groupement 25		**Aire-sur-la-Lys**
GC III/1	MS 406	Norrent-Fontes
GC III/2	MS 406	Cambrai Niergnies (re-equipping with the Hawk 75 A after suffering heavy Luftwaffe ground attacks, operational 7 June 1940).
GC I/4	Hawk 75 A	Wez-Thuisy
GC II/8	MB 152	Calais-Marck
Groupement chasse de nuit (nightfighter units)		
ECN 1/13	Potez 631	Meaux-Esbly
ECN 2/13	Potez 631	Melun-Villaroche
ECN 3/13	Potez 631	Le Plessis Belleville
ECN 4/13	Potez 631	Betz-Bouillancy
Groupement chasse de Lyon		**Lyon**
ECN 5/13	Potez 631	Loyettes
Naval units		
AC 1	Potez 631	Calais-Marck (naval Flottilla)
AC 2	Potez 631	Calais-Marck (naval Flottilla)
AC 3	MB 151	Hyères (undergoing training)
Polish unit		
GC I/145	C. 714	Lyons-Bron (with Polish personnel)

In addition, the French Air Force had a number of units based in North Africa, Syria and Indo-China.

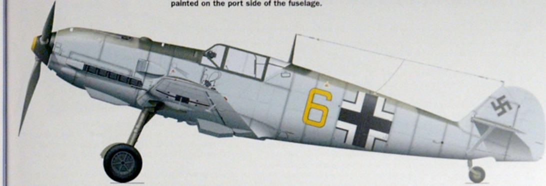
Notes on French units

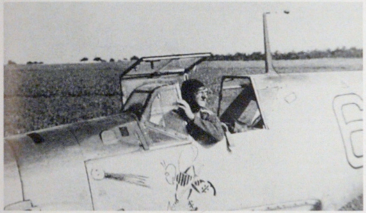
GC	***Groupe de Chasse*** *or Fighter Group, comprised two escadrilles or Squadrons. For example, CG I/4 had the first and second escadrilles, II/4 had the third and fourth and so on. Each escadrille had a strength of about twelve aircraft.*
ECMJ	***escadrille de chasse multiplace de jour*** *or Multi-seat Day Fighter Squadron comprised 12 aircraft.*
ECN	***escadrille de chasse du nuit*** *or Night Fighter Squadron comprised 12 aircraft.*

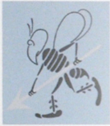
LEFT: Lt. Hans-Wedige von Weiher is seen here in his Bf 109 E-1 being congratulated by his ground crew on his second victory, a Hurricane, shot down near Maastricht on 12 May 1940. His first victory was claimed on 9 September 1939, during the Polish campaign when he was with I.(J)/LG 2. He had at one time also been a member of the 'Luftwaffe's Kunstflugstaffel' (see Jagdwaffe, Section 3) and was transferred to I./JG 27 early in 1940.

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 piloted by Fw. Christoph Schuhmann of 3./JG 3, May 1940

This aircraft carried standard Jagdwaffe camouflage for the period of light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath with dark green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) in a splinter pattern on the uppersurfaces. The Staffel's badge, a black cartoon wasp with a spear, was only painted on the port side of the fuselage.

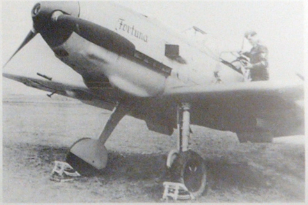






3./JG 3 Staffel badge

ABOVE: Fw. Christoph Schuhmann sits in his belly-landed Bf 109 E-4 coded 'Yellow 6' (outlined in black) of 3./JG 3. Note the oil staining around the oil filler cap.



RIGHT: This pilot, an Obergefreiter, with his Bf 109 E-3 of 3./JG 3, is inspecting his flying helmet in preparation for a flight. The aircraft was camouflaged in standard splinter pattern of that time with dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces and light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The 3. Staffel badge is clearly visible below the cockpit and the aircraft also has a personalised inscription 'Fortuna' (fortune) painted on the nose. The spinner and propeller are in the standard colour of black-green (RLM 70).

"The war began for us at 03.00 hours in the morning"

ERICH KIRCHEIS

Lt. Erich Kircheis of the Stab JG 51 was shot down on 28 August 1940 during Battle of Britain and taken prisoner. He died on 30 April 1998.

"I was born on 4 October 1912. I was very much attracted by the possibility of flying. It seemed much easier for me to join the army and become a military pilot than remain a civilian. The problem was that places in the army were rare since the Versailles Treaty and therefore I joined the police in 1934, in the hope that I might be transferred to the army later. This finally happened when Hitler formed the new German army.

In 1936, after having opted for aviation, I was transferred to a *Luftkriegsschule* (air warfare school), and being successful at various tests, I was sent to a *Fliegerschule* where I became a pilot. Having gained my pilot certificates, I was posted to I./JG 135 at Bad Aibling. My first *Kommandeur* was *Major* Max Ibel followed, at the end of 1938, by *Major* Ernst *Freiherr* von Berg. I joined the *Gruppenstab* where I became Technical Officer. Apart from the *Kommandeur*, our *Stab* had a *Gruppenadjutant* (Hans Schmoller-Haldy) and a signals or *Nachrichten-Offizier* (Josef 'Pips' Priller, who was later to become a famous ace).

In September 1939, our lone *Gruppe* was incorporated into a larger formation, becoming part of JG 51 under *Oberst* Theo Osterkamp. In November 1939, 'Uncle Theo' took me into his *Geschwaderstab* as *Adjutant*. The *Adjutant* was important in a *Geschwader* - he was a kind of 'public relations' officer between the *Kommodore* and his *Kommandeure* as well as with the different *Division-Stäbe*. He thus liaised between the high command and the lower formations including ordinary soldiers. He also had to replace the *Kommodore* if he was temporarily away for any reason. He even had to take over during operational missions, flying as if he was the *Kommodore*.

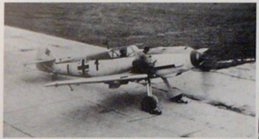
In the spring of 1940, our *Geschwaderstab* was transferred to Bönninghardt from where we began the invasion of France. Everyone was told that a new war would begin. In fact, we were in a state of conflict since September 1939, when France and Great Britain had declared war on us. Even if there was no fighting on the ground, heavy combat had taken place in the air since the autumn of 1939. The only doubts we had concerned the date when it would begin and the tactics we would use.

I clearly remember that during the night of 9-10 May 1940, the *Kommodoren* were called to a large officers' meeting. Apparently, they were told during this meeting that the war would begin in a few hours; and they received precise orders.

The war began for us at 03.00 hours in the morning. The pilots were woken. On the airfield, despite the darkness, intensive activity was taking place with the ground personal preparing our aircraft.

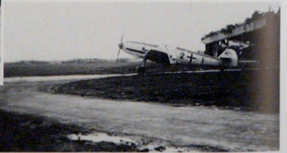
During the first day, we flew several missions, escorting bombers and troop transports which were trying to land on the roads around Amsterdam. In fact, paratroops had already landed near these 'landing strips' and had prepared the area but we had to cover the landing itself and discourage any counter-attacks on the ground. In fact we had virtually no opposition and I just remember one claim by our Stab, performed by the *Kommodore* himself. (Note: on 12 May 1940 Osterkamp had his first 'kill' of the campaign).

On 13 or 14 May, we received orders to move to Holland, to Eindhoven, where we would be based on a large airfield. However, reconnaissance showed that we would not be able to land because the runway was obstructed by concrete blocks. I flew over there with a Fieseler *Storch* and managed to land between several of the obstructions. I found a Dutchman (wearing civilian clothes) and ordered him to find the airfield personnel and move all blocks. By the evening everything was ready and we were able to land with two *Gruppen* from our *Geschwader*. Later we moved to Breda and Antwerp, but only met a few enemy aircraft in combat."



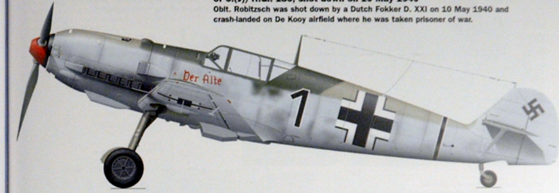
ABOVE: On 16 March 1940, Oblt. Kuno Wendt took over command of 8./JG 26, the 'Adamson Staffel' based at Mülheim. His Bf 109 E, 'Black 1' carried a small metal triangle just above the centre of the radio aerial, indicating his position as Staffelkapitän. As can be seen, III./JG 26 used the vertical bar to identify the third Gruppe as an alternative to the wavy line used by other Jagdgeschwader.

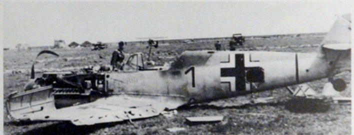
BELOW: A Bf 109 E coded 'Black 2' of 8./JG 26, the 'Adamson Staffel' based at Mülheim in the Ruhr, shortly before Westfeldzug, the campaign against France and the Low Countries in May 1940. The 'Adamson Staffel' was originally 4./JG 26, but was redesignated 8./JG 26 in September 1939.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 flown by Oblt. Dieter Robitzsch, Staffelkapitän of 5.(J)/Tr.Gr. 186, shot down on 10 May 1940

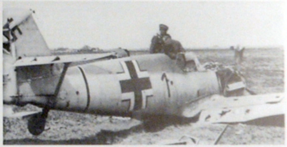
Oblt. Robitzsch was shot down by a Dutch Fokker D. XXI on 10 May 1940 and crash-landed on De Kooy airfield where he was taken prisoner of war.

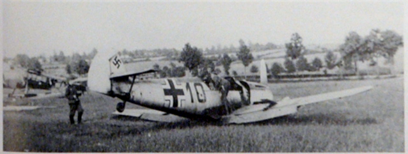




LEFT: Port side view of Oblt. Dieter Robitzsch's crash-landed Bf 109 E-1 coded 'Black 1' (outlined in white) at De Kooy in Holland. German Luftwaffe soldiers inspect the wreckage after the airfield had been captured by German troops. There is an inscription below the cockpit of the pilot's nickname 'Der Alte' ('The Old One') which was possibly in red. Robitzsch was shot down by Lt. Jan van Overvest flying a Fokker D. XXI. Both pilots met in 1961 and celebrated the occasion.

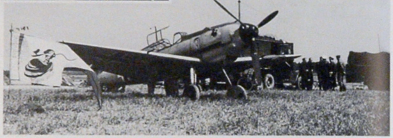
RIGHT: The starboard view of Oblt. Robitzsch's Bf 109 E-1showing the camouflage demarcation on this side of the fuselage. Note the aircraft still has the Hakenkreuz carried over the fin and rudder. The aircraft was camouflaged in a standard splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The aircraft also carried a black band outlined in white, the same width as the code number, running right around the fuselage.



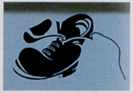


LEFT: This belly-landed Bf 109 E possibly of 2./JG 52 and therefore coded 'Red 10', was photographed in May 1940. It is possible that the aircraft carried the 'baby devil' badge of the 'Rabatz Staffel', 2./JG 52, on the port side. Note the rudder appears to be white but this is more likely to be a trick of the light as the rudder is turned more face on to the camera.

LEFT: Oblt. Gerhard Ködderitzsch of the Stab I./JG 77 (facing the camera) talking to another member of the Gruppe. During the attack on France and the Low Countries, the unit was based at Odendorf.



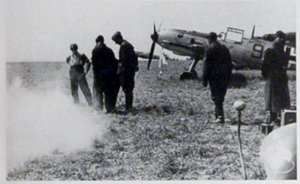
RIGHT: For the invasion of France and the Low Countries, I./JG 77 was based at Odendorf at the beginning of May 1940. The Gruppe carried the battered boot emblem which was introduced by its commander, Hptm. Johannes Janke. Because of its nomadic existence, the Gruppe was often known as the 'Wanderzirkus Janke' or 'Janke's Travelling Circus'. This picture depicts one of the unit's Bf 109 E-3s coded 'Black 9' with the emblem in black on the nose and also on the Gruppe pennant flag.



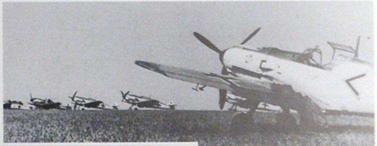
Variant of the I./JG 77 badge

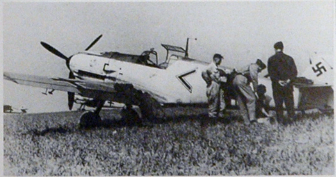
ABOVE AND RIGHT: Mechanics at work with their ground handling and re-fueling equipment for the Bf 109 E-3s of I./JG 77. The figure in the centre of the above photo is Oblt. Gerhard Ködderitzsch.

RIGHT: Another view of the ground crew refuelling one of I./JG 77's Bf 109 E-3s at Odendorf early in May 1940. All the aircraft at this time were camouflaged in the standard splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. Most of the machines also have the upper nose gun troughs painted yellow (RLM 04).

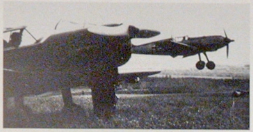


LEFT: Mechanics and ground crew of 2./JG 77 just prior to the invasion of France and the Low Countries. The Bf 109 E-3 carries the code 'Black 9' outlined in red, this colour replacing the previous red to identify the second Staffel within a Gruppe around this time. The aircraft also carries the battered boot badge of I./JG 77 with a personal inscription 'Tutti' below the cockpit.



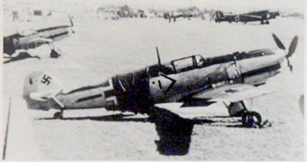


LEFT AND ABOVE: A Bf 109 E-3 of Stab I./JG 77, W.Nr. 5102, marked with a single black chevron outlined in white and again in black, usually identifying the aircraft flown by the Gruppenadjutant. The emblem on the nose is the old boot of I./JG 77 and a personal inscription, 'Kieki', below the cockpit. Note that the aircraft in the background carry a black horizontal bar aft of the fuselage cross, but in this case, these were not aircraft of I./JG 77.



BELOW: This airfield near Oslo was shared with units operating Ju 52s and Bf 110s, probably belonging to ZG 76, which had played a major role in the operations in Scandinavia. The two Bf 109 E-1s shown here probably belong to the Gruppenstab of II./JG 77, with the aircraft in the distance having a single chevron of the Gruppenadjutant as well as a badge, below forward of the cockpit, which is unfortunately not discernable. The nearest machine has a single chevron and vertical bar indicating the markings of the Geschwaderadjutant but with a horizontal bar of the II. Gruppe. Note the mark on the rudder which could be the penguin badge of the 6. Staffel.

ABOVE: By mid-April 1940 the Luftwaffe had played an important part in the invasion of Norway in which JG 77 had taken part. Here a Bf 109 E-3 of I./JG 77 comes in to land at Odendorf airfield early in May 1940 with a Bf 108 communications aircraft in the foreground.



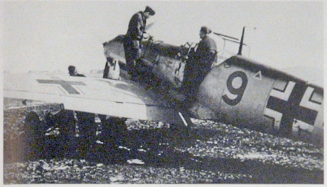
"All that remained of the elevator was ribs."

UFFZ. REINHOLD THIEL, 5./JG 52

Weather report:: Cumulus clouds, lower cloud level at 1500 metres and the above 2000 metres. Between the ground and the lower cloud level was thick haze. We flew to the front partly beneath the clouds and up to 3000 metres. Some distance beyond Arlon, a member of the *Staffel* reported seeing an enemy aircraft. As the first flight *(Schwarm)* took on the pursuit, the second flight, of which I was a wingman *(Rottenflieger)*, formed an echelon right. As we came closer, I could see on my left, between the angle of the fuselage and wing, an enemy bomber and to the left and right, fighters were flying past this aircraft. We were flying echelon right and my field of vision to the front was limited, I never heard the warning of the presence of the enemy fighters. After a while, my flight leader flew down in the direction of the enemy aircraft in the combat formation of single file. Somewhat surprised that the first three aircraft had not opened fire, I managed to place an opponent in my sights and opened fire for about four seconds, from a distance of 150 metres and an angle above him of 30-20 degrees. The burst from my four machine guns hit the target directly and I stopped firing momentarily, in order not to shoot down one of our own fighters which had appeared on the left from underneath a cloud and passed the bomber in a right hand curve. From the comments of my comrades, this was not one of our fighters as I had thought, but a Morane which attacked me from the rear. Immediately, I opened fire again for a four-second burst and pulled up my aircraft to the right, since I was very close to the enemy, I suspected there was someone behind me.

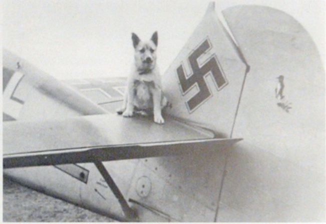
The situation regarding the enemy was unclear during the second burst of fire. I had not observed whether the enemy went down but was positive that he had received many hits. After my aircraft pulled away, my elevator failed to respond for a moment to my controls but I was able to recover after reducing throttle. While this was happening, someone transmitted over the radio, "One aircraft shot down." Then I heard the question, "By whom?" Since no one spoke-up, the thought occurred to me that this downed aircraft was very probably the same one that I had attacked and I reported the attack on a bomber using my code name, but no answer followed. When I had my aircraft under control again, I noticed that I was alone and could see none of my *Staffel* comrades. Immediately, I headed back in their direction and again sighted a bomber. I dived at him and opened fire with a good burst which struck the target. As I approached the aircraft, I noticed underneath, a further five or six bombers and reported this to the squadron leader. About four times, I heard the question, "What is the location of the bombers?" Since I did not know my location, I said, "Flying in a westerly direction."

The remaining bombers flew in a half-circle 50-100 meters below the second aircraft I had attacked and in order not to fly too far into France alone, I disengaged from the enemy. I noticed when looking in my rear view mirror that my left elevator had been damaged and I immediately realised that this explained why my controls were jammed, which had occurred after my first attack and had been hit by the bomber, as I had not encountered any other enemy aircraft. Due to the tail unit damage, I reported to the *Staffelkapitän* that I was leaving and returned to base at 60-80 degrees in the clouds. After a while, I crossed the front lines and formed up with three He 111s *(Kette)* that were flying a course of 120-130 degrees. In order to reach a base as fast and as safely as possible, and as I had lost my orientation long before, I 'escorted' the *Kette* and landed at Karlsruhe. In Karlsruhe, it was established that I had received one cannon and numerous machine-gun shell hits. All that remained of the left elevator was a framework of ribs.

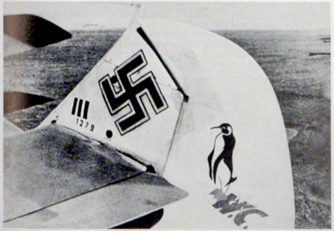


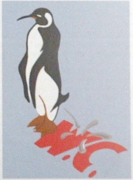
LEFT: Mechanics at work on a Bf 109 E, coded 'Yellow 9' outlined in black of 6./JG 77 based on the windswept island of Westerland/Sylt in the North Sea in the spring of 1940. Between the two men can be seen the Staffel badge comprising a penguin with the letters 'WC'. It is not known whether these stood for Winston Churchill or 'Wasser Klosett' (Water Closet) or perhaps both! In keeping with camouflage at this time, the Bf 109s of this unit were camouflaged in the standard splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath.

RIGHT: A close-up of the tail of a Bf 109 E of 6./JG 77 taken in the spring of 1940 on the Island of Westerland, shows the yellow second Gruppe horizontal bar outlined in black painted aft of the fuselage Balkenkreuz. Note the Staffel emblem, a penguin with the letters 'WC' on the rudder. This badge was normally painted beneath the cockpit and but often also on the rudder. II./JG 77 was the only Jagdgruppe planned to take part in Operation Weserübung as the campaign against Norway and Denmark was known. It was probably chosen because since its creation, it had only served for coastal defensive duties.

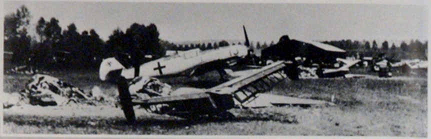


BELOW: This view of the tail unit of a Bf 109 E belonging to 6./JG 77 shows a variety of interesting features. The black W.Nr. 1279 is clearly visible as are the three victory bars. The aircraft has obviously been re-painted, as the old position of the Hakenkreuz is bleeding through the paintwork. The machine has also received some combat damage which is indicated by the black repair patches which are dated, the lower '11.11.39' and the patch in the Hakenkreuz '?.02.40'. The penguin badge is larger than normal with the initial WC being painted probably in red.

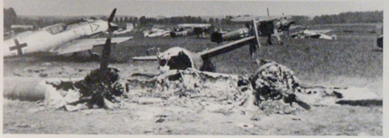


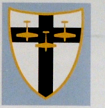


6./JG 77 badge portrayed a penguin defecating on the initials WC



RIGHT: Bf 109 Es of 2./JG 1 photographed amongst the wreckage of destroyed French aircraft at Charleville around 22 May 1940. The aircraft nearest the camera carries the black number '13' on its engine cowling, a positioning unique to I./JG 1 (later III./JG 27).

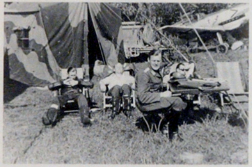




The 'Jesau Kreuz' badge of I./JG 1

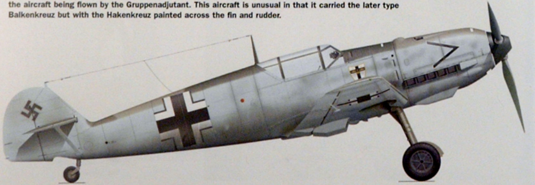
LEFT: Another view of the airfield at Charleville, around May 1940, showing more destroyed French aircraft. In the scene are several Bf 109 Es of I./JG 1, and also two Hs 126s. The Bf 109 E-1 in the left foreground carries the 'Jesau Kreuz' badge and the markings of the Geschwaderadjutant on the nose, a single chevron and vertical bar.

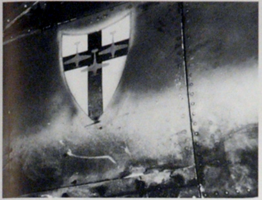
RIGHT: Four officers of I./JG 1 relax at Gymnich probably just before the attack on the Albert Canal in May 1940. From left to right are Hptm. Wilhelm Balthasar (Staffelkapitän of 1./JG 1), Oblt. Karl-Heinz Kirstein (of Stab I./JG 1), Oblt. Walter Adolf (Staffelkapitän of 2./JG 1) and Hptm. Joachim Schlichting (Kommandeur of I./JG 1). The Bf 109 E-1 in the background carries the single black chevron of the Gruppenadjutant, but, uniquely for I./JG 1 (later III./JG 27), this was positioned on the engine cowling. The 'Jesau Kreuz' emblem of the Gruppe was painted just forward of the cockpit.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of Stab I./JG 1 at Gymnich, early May 1940

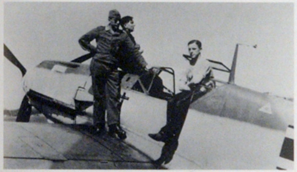
As far as is known I./JG 1 (later III./JG 27) was the only Jagdwaffe unit to have its unit identification letters or symbols painted on the fuselage noses of its Bf 109s. The single chevron theoretically points to the aircraft being flown by the Gruppenadjutant. This aircraft is unusual in that it carried the later type Balkenkreuz but with the Hakenkreuz painted across the fin and rudder.



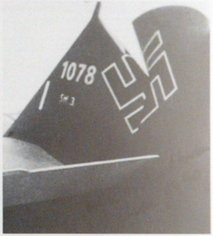


ABOVE: The 'Jesau Kreuz' badge of I./JG 1 seen here on a Bf 109 E. The aircraft sides had originally been painted light-blue (RLM 65) with the dark green (RLM 71) having been applied later and painted around the badge.

LEFT: Oblt. Walter Adolf, Staffelkapitän of 2./JG 1, relaxes in a deckchair at Gymnich in the spring of 1940. On 12 May 1940, Adolf shot down three RAF Blenheims, eventually claiming five victories in France. He was later awarded the Ritterkreuz on 13 Novemebr 1940 and killed in action on 18 September 1941.



ABOVE: A Bf 109 E of I./JG 1 coded 'White 5' at Gymnich airfield during the first half of May 1940. This unit carried its identification numbers on the nose of its aircraft, which was an unusual practice.



ABOVE: The tail unit of Lt. Helmut Lohoff's Bf 109 E, W.Nr. 1078 which was painted in white, photographed at Mont St. Ecouvez-Nord airfield in May 1940. On 22 May Lohoff, of 3./JG 77, made his first claim (note the hand-written note on the photo) against a Lysander in the Carvin area. Even at this time, some aircraft were still carrying the Hakenkreuz across the fin and rudder and this aircraft also retained the dark green paint of the late 1939 period on the fuselage but not the uppersurfaces. The fin also shows a single victory bar with a small inscription 'Stl.3' which may indicate the 3. Staffel. Note also that the Hakenkreuz is painted across the top of the fin.

LEFT: Gymnich airfield photographed around 12 May 1940 with Bf 109 Es of I./JG 1 in the background. A soldier stands guard by the unit's standard.

"He disappeared behind a wood and I thought, he's had it!"

HANS VON HAHN

Hans von Hahn was born on 7 August 1914 at Frankfurt/Main. At the time of this account, he was serving with III./JG 53 under Hptm. Werner Mölders Not to be confused with Hans 'Assi' Hahn, Hans von Hahn died of cancer on 5 November 1957.

"We found that '*Vati*' (Daddy) Mölders was the very devil when our *Staffeln* were flying exercises. Everything had to be done perfectly, both from the technical and the time point of view. No chief, no master sergeant, no *Oberwerkmeister* liked to receive a disapproving glance from him. A reprimand from Mölders counted double.

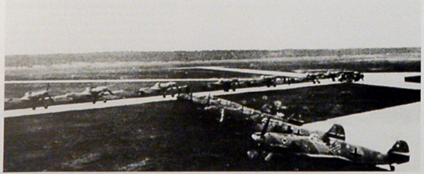
Then we received the order to '*Alert*', to '*Move*!' The guard around the airfield was immediately increased and we were not allowed to receive any further telephone calls. Hurriedly we packed and prepared to leave. Pilots waited in their aircraft while the convoys carrying the ground crews were also readied. At last we, the chiefs, received orders in the briefing room: "*Move to Trier*". We also received the secret instruction that finally the march into France would begin. At first we didn't believe it because, several times before, '*Vati*' with a straight face, had bluffed us. This time, however, it was true.

"*Come on, let's go!*" The *Vorkommandos* ran and the *Staffeln* took off for Trier-Diedenhofen. Our first combat area was Trier-Euren-Metz. It was busy and noisy both by day and night. Overhead, bomber squadrons were en route for France, on the ground hundreds of columns of troops and tanks make for Sedan through Luxembourg.

The first enemy aircraft we encountered were RAF Hurricanes and I was able to claim my second victory against one of them. On that day we were flying with '*Vati*' again. At first we didn't see any enemy aircraft, but before the Maas, the *Kommandeur* suddenly said over the radio: "*Look out - Stukas*!" When we got nearer we discovered that the aircraft carried roundels. Enemy roundels. Belgians! Everything was chaotic. We did not really attempt to fight, but I managed to get into a favourable position behind a brown coloured enemy plane. The guy went into a dive and began evasive manoeuvres, always flying in a western direction. However, I managed to keep my attacking position and opened fire. By my third burst, he only had half his tail left. Bits of his wings flew towards me. His right wing was shredded. Finally, he disappeared behind a wood and I thought, he's had it!

I began to fly east at low altitude. I briefly saw a Messerschmitt which I quickly lost. By now my tanks were nearly empty and I wondered if I would be able to reach my home base. I had no idea of my location, I kept flying eastwards, towards Germany. The area over which I was flying became more hilly and I sighted a small stream. I thought this must flow into the Mosel and I followed it. Ten kilometres before the town, my engine stopped: no more fuel. I found a field and made a belly landing. Fortunately, everything went well and the aircraft survived almost intact. I walked to the nearest town and called '*Vati*'. I heard later that he was delighted to hear that I was safe and that I had also made a claim. I was picked up by car and driven to the airfield. I gave my combat report in the operations room. It appeared that my comrade Klaus had shot at my victim just before it went down and it was not clear who would be credited with the claim. 'Vati' let us make the decision but neither Klaus or I wanted to take the credit from each other. Finally, Klaus was awarded the kill. I was more than happy to have been successful in my second combat."

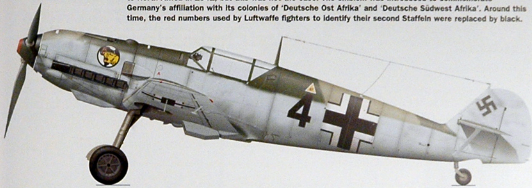
The claim described above probably took place on 15 May 1940 at 10.00 hours when *Lt.* Klaus was credited with his second victory (a Hurricane). *Oblt.* Hans von Hahn, *Staffelkapitän* of 8./JG 53, was more successful on 21 May when he was credited with three victories: a LeO-45, a Morane and a P-36.



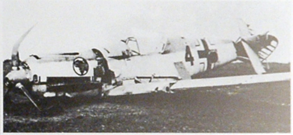
LEFT: A group of Bf 109 E-3s from I./JG 53 probably photographed at Wiesbaden-Erbenheim during the first days of the offensive against France. The aircraft in the foreground, marked with a double chevron, was piloted by the Gruppenkommandeur, Hptm. Lothar von Janson. On 11 May 1940, I./JG 53 claimed seven French Moranes, including two by von Janson. This photo was probably taken shortly after these victories, as the Kommandeur's aircraft shows at least two victory bars. Von Janson made his first claim on 25 September 1939 against a French Potez-63.

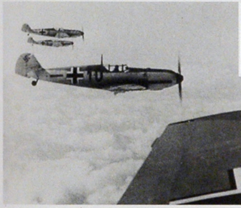
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 piloted by Lt. Fritz Keller of 2./JG 27, May 1940

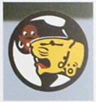
It has been widely thought that the emblem on this aircraft was introduced when I./JG 27 was transferred to North Africa in 1941, but this was not the case. The emblem was introduced to commemorate Germany's affiliation with its colonies of 'Deutsche Ost Afrika' and 'Deutsche Südwest Afrika'. Around this time, the red numbers used by Luftwaffe fighters to identify their second Staffeln were replaced by black.



RIGHT: Lt. Fritz Keller of 2./JG 27 crash-landed this Bf 109 E-3, coded 'Black 4', during May 1940. He made two belly landings during that month, the first near Liège (on 12 May), the second near Hirson (on 23 May). The Gruppe emblem, painted on the nose, had been introduced just before the invasion and refers to Germany's 'African colonial-emblems' carried by 2./JG 27 at the beginning of the year.

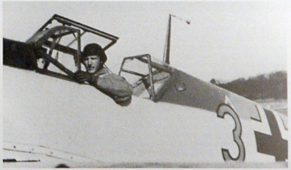




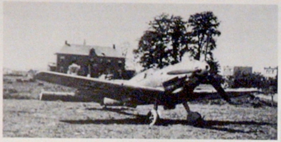


I./JG 27

ABOVE: This formation of Bf 109 Es of 6./JG 27 was taken during the first days of the offensive against France. The aircraft nearest the camera, 'Yellow 10', was piloted by Uffz. Fritz Gromotka, with Uffz. Heinz Uebe in 'Yellow 2' and Fw. Erich Krenz in 'Yellow 4'. Note the Hakenkreuz of 'Yellow 10' is still painted across the fin and rudder, a practice that was carried on by 6./JG 27 until the end of the offensive in the West. Fritz Gromotka was later awarded the Ritterkreuz.

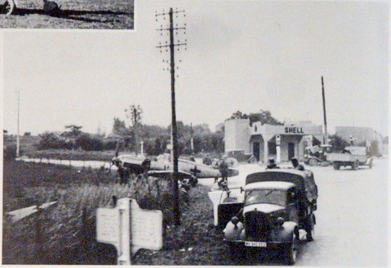


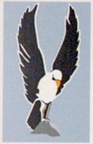
RIGHT: Lt. Julius Neumann of 6./JG 27 photographed in the cockpit of his Bf 109 E coded 'Yellow 3' outlined in black during the first days of the offensive against France. It is interesting to note that the number '3' has been painted over the 'octane fuel triangle'. This triangle was coloured yellow, and normally outlined in white with the legend '87' (indicating the octane rating of the fuel) in black.



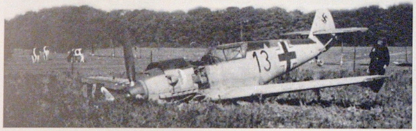
ABOVE: This Bf 109 E-1 was sent to France as part of I.(J)/LG 2.

BELOW: This Bf 109 E of 1./JG 26, coded 'White 5', made a lucky emergency landing near a Shell petrol station in France during May or June 1940. The rudder still has the Hakenkreuz painted across the fin and rudder and has the gun troughs painted yellow (RLM 04). The aircraft also carried the JG 26 'Schlageter' badge in the usual place but the original grasshopper badge of this Staffel had been replaced by an eagle with raised wings, which is just visible below the cockpit. During the French campaign it was quite common for German vehicles to keep their fuel tanks topped up by using any local garage that was available. It is unlikely that the fuel available here would have have been suitable for the Bf 109.



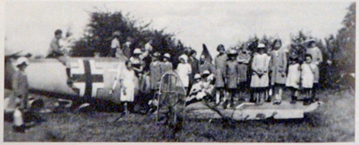


New badge of 1./JG 26



LEFT: A Bf 109 E-1 , 'Black 13' outlined in white, belly landed just after take off from Landweiler on 25 May 1940. It was piloted by Uffz. Albrecht 'Ali' Griener of 5./JG 52. Note the 'Rabbatz' (little devil) badge on the removed cowling. The rear ring of the spinner has also been painted in the red Staffel colour.

RIGHT: A Bf 109 E, coded 'White 7' outlined in black believed to be from 1./JG 2, crashed at Forge-Philippe in Belgium near the French border in May 1940. Local school children, no doubt fascinated by the machine, have been allowed to make an inspection accompanied by their teachers. The aircraft was camouflaged in the standard splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The uppersurface colour demarcation appears to be higher than normal as it was usually brought down in line with the upper part of the horizontal bars of the Balkenkreuz.



"I came up behind the Morane, but my opening shots went ahead of their target."

HUGO DAHMER

Uffz. Hugo Dahmer taking a nap in the cockpit of his Bf 109 E

Hugo Dahmer was awarded the Ritterkreuz on 1 August 1941. He later served with JG 77, JG 5, JG 26 and JG 2 before being seriously wounded in October 1943.

"I was born at Koblenz on 7th May 1918. Most of my youth was spent in the town of Wittlich near Trier. There I was fortunate to be able to watch several aviation shows given by former First World War pilots. These men, flying their old aircraft, were real heroes for a young boy such as me, and they helped me decide to become a pilot.

In 1934, I enrolled at the civilian *Fliegervorschule* at Quiddelbach where I obtained my A-2 flying certificate. My training continued at Bielefeld and, in October 1936, in order to avoid being transferred to the *Reichsdienst* (civilian service), I joined the army at Lübeck. A period of six months ground-based training followed in very miserable conditions. Finally, I was able to transfer to the *Flugzeugführerschule* (pilot training school) at Schönewalde near Berlin. where I successively obtained my B-1, B-2 and aerobatic certificates. I then passed my multi-engine C certificate at Stettin, piloting a Ju 52, and also gained my blind flying diploma (which I did not enjoy). I finally ended my pilot training in April 1939, being qualified to fly any type of aircraft in Germany.

I was then posted to the 4./JG 26 at Düsseldorf where I trained to become a fighter pilot on several aircraft types including the Fw *'Stösser'* and the Bf 109. My *Gruppenkommandeur* was *Hptm.* Herwig Knüppel who had gained much of his experience in Spain where he obtained the '*Spanienkreuz* in Gold with *Schwerten*'.

While many units took part in the invasion of Poland, our *Staffel* patrolled the western border with France. We were on continuous alert, using very primitive grass airfields and we were often scrambled in order to intercept enemy planes.

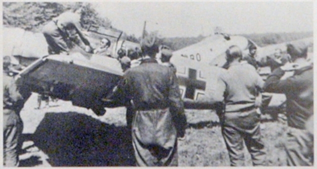
By the spring of 1940, we all realised that it was very probable that we would be involved in a major war with the Western Allies. Of course we had been at war since September 1939, but although we had scrambled several times we had not seen much combat.

Although I was on holiday on 9 May, I interrupted it when I heard that the 'real' war had started. I went back to the unit, which had just been transferred to a base near the Belgian border.

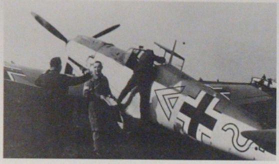
On 17 May, I made my first claim. I came across a Morane MS 406 which was chasing a Bf 109 in circles. The French pilot opened fire, but keep shooting too far ahead. I came up behind the Morane, but my opening shots also went ahead of their target. Eventually I fired between the two aircraft, anticipating the flight path of the Morane which was hit. (The MS 406 was destroyed near Tournai at 16:31 hours).

My former *Staffelkapitän, Hptm.* Knüppel was killed in action on 19 May. I do not know how. He was flying ahead of us and just disappeared into the cloud. We never saw him again.

After a few days, we transferred to Belgium and then to France, using quite primitive bases. Most had never been used as airfields before and were usually large meadows. The unit just sent a pilot to reconnoitre in order to find somewhere to land and take-off. That meant that we had no hangars or other special equipment. Pilots and men were billeted anywhere, in a house or a farm near the meadow. Remember that most of the population was on the road, trying to escape the German advance. When we arrived in a town it was nearly always virtually empty, the only persons we saw being the elderly. We had no difficulty in finding food; cows, milk and eggs being available in abundance on the farms... After we found a possible 'airfield', a *'Vorkommando'* including the 'ersten Warten' (leading mechanic) with fuel and essential material were sent to the meadow in order to receive the pilots with their aircraft. The main column followed later."

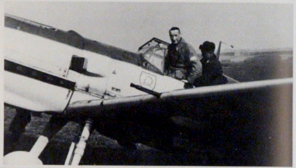


LEFT: Hptm. Hennig Strümpell, Staffelkapitän of 3./JG 2, receives congratulations for a victory from his ground crew, after returning from an operation over France on 20 May 1940 in his Bf 109 E-3. Strümpell claimed a French LeO 45 bomber (his third kill including two in Spain) while 3./JG 2 claimed a total of eight LeO 45s (including two by Lt. Helmut Wick). The Balkenkreuz appears to have been modified by the ground crew, no doubt under instructions, by increasing the width of the black angles of the central area of the cross which looks as though it has been painted in a different colour, although this could be a trick of the light falling on high gloss paint. Note the automatic extended leading edge slots. In the background is a Fw 58 communications aircraft.



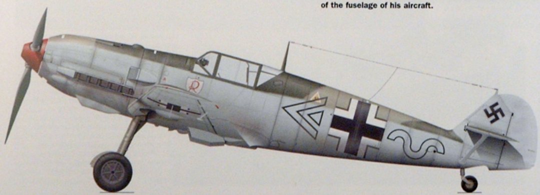
LEFT: Major Erich Mix standing by his Bf 109 E-3 during May 1940. The double chevron painted as a black outline, indicated the Gruppenkommandeur's rank with the 'wavy line' of the third Gruppe (aft of the Balkenkreuz) is well illustrated here. His aircraft had the standard factory finish of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM Grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The inner part of the gun troughs were painted yellow (RLM 04).

RIGHT AND BELOW: Major Dr Erich Mix, Kommandeur of III./JG 2 and also Mayor of the City of Wiesbaden, in the cockpit of his Bf 109 E-3, W.Nr. 1526. After having been a pilot in the First World War, Adjutant and acting Kommandeur of I./JG 53, Mix was appointed leader of III./JG 2 on 8 March 1940. He was reported missing over France on 21 May 1940, but had escaped with relatively light injuries. Note the Geschwader insignia: the red 'R' under the cockpit for 'Richthofen' (the honorary name of JG 2).



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 W.Nr. 1526, flown by Major Erich Mix, Kommandeur of III./JG 2, France, 21 May 1940

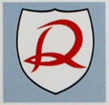
Mix was shot down on 21 May but was able to make a successful belly landing near Roye in France. The double chevron of the Gruppenkommandeur and wavy line of the third Gruppe were painted in black outlines on the sides of the fuselage of his aircraft.



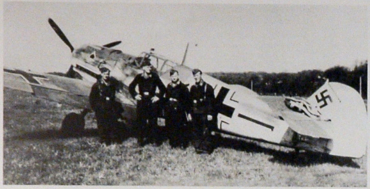
LEFT AND BELOW: Major Erich Mix taxies his Bf 109 E-3 W.Nr. 1526 to the take-off point. The airfield appears to be situated in a hilly region with the runway being most probably situated at the top of this slope.

LEFT: An Oberleutnant reports to his commander. Second from the right is Major Erich Mix of III./JG 2 with his Bf 109 E-3 in the background. Note the rank insignia on the sleeve.

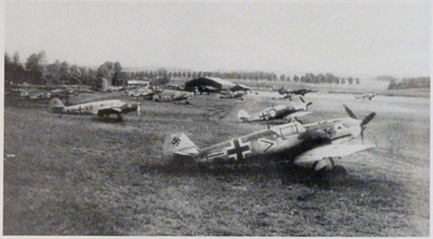
BELOW: After his crash landing, Erich Mix managed to get back behind German lines and spent some time in hospital recovering from his minor injuries. Here he is visited by some 'Hitlerjugend'.



JG 2 'Richthofen' Geschwader badge



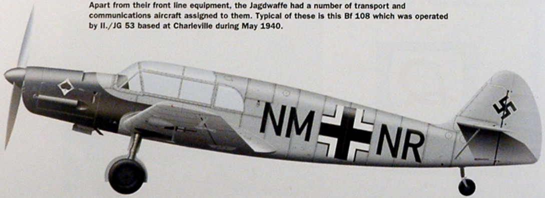
LEFT: A photograph for the family album! On an improvised airfield in France in May 1940, the crew of a Flak gun asked the pilot, possibly the Gruppenadjutant, of this Bf 109 E-3 (from the II./Jagdgeschwader 53 'Pik-As' (Ace of Spades), possibly belonging to the Gruppenstab) to take their photograph. After putting his parachute on the tailplane, he captured the scene. Note this aircraft has had some slight mottling applied to the fuselage and also has a rear view mirror fitted above the cockpit.



RIGHT: These aircraft from II./JG 53 are dispersed around the airfield at Charleville in France. In the distance can be seen a He 111, a Ju 52 and a Ju 34. The Bf 109 E in the foreground carries a single chevron of the Gruppenstab with a small figure '1' within. The remainder of the Bf 109 Es belong to 4./JG 53 and all appear to still have the Hakenkreuz painted across the fin and rudder. The Bf 108 B-1 in the left centre of the picture is the Stab communications aircraft. it is painted overall light-grey (RLM 77) with a black nose. The factory code NM+NR is in black and the aircraft also carries the JG 53 'Pik-As' badge

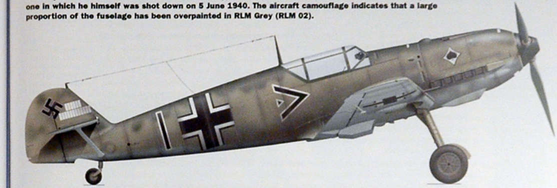
Messerschmitt Bf 108 B-1 of II./JG 53, May 1940

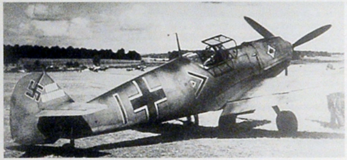
Apart from their front line equipment, the Jagdwaffe had a number of transport and communications aircraft assigned to them. Typical of these is this Bf 108 which was operated by II./JG 53 based at Charleville during May 1940.

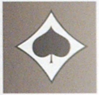


Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 piloted by Hptm. Werner Mölders, Gruppenkommandeur of III./JG 53, 25 May 1940

Shown just after Mölders claimed his 18th victory, a French Morane 406, this aircraft was probably the one in which he himself was shot down on 5 June 1940. The aircraft camouflage indicates that a large proportion of the fuselage has been overpainted in RLM Grey (RLM 02).







JG 53 'Pik-As' badge

ABOVE: This Bf 109 E-3 was flown by Hptm. Werner Mölders with III./JG 53, from late 1939 until 6 June when he was shot down by Lieutenant Pomier-Layragues of GC II./7. The aircraft still carried the old style national markings of the narrow white angled Balkenkreuz and the Hakenkreuz painted accross the fin and rudder. In addition it also carried a double chevron of the Gruppenkommandeur and the III. Gruppe vertical bar and the JG 53 'Pik-As' badge. At this time the fin carried 18 white victory bars but he had 7 more when he was shot down.

ABOVE: Photographed at Charleville airfield in May 1940, this Bf 109 E of 5./JG 53 is coded '9', the number possibly in grey, outlined in white. Around this time, the second Staffel in a fighter unit began to replace red numbers with black, and this may have been an interim stage. In the foreground are the burnt-out remains of an allied aircraft.

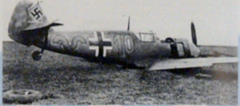
BELOW: Oblt. Johannes Steinhoff was appointed Staffelkapitän of 4./JG 52 on 1 February 1940. He is seen here at Speyer airfield with the unit's 'Spiess' (Staffeladjudant). On 10 May, Steinhoff claimed two Blenheim bombers shot down. The aircraft in the background are Bf 109 Es coded 'White 1' and 'White 9'.

MAY-JUNE 1940

Dunkirk

On 23 May 1940, a German armoured thrust reached Calais, effectively cutting off British, French and Belgian troops positioned on the Franco-Belgian border. With their backs to the sea, Churchill had suggested, as early as 20 May, that a fleet of small vessels be assembled to sail to France should an evacuation become necessary.

On 24 May, *General* Ewald von Kleist's spearhead *Panzer* units rolled to a halt along the high ridge of ground which skirted a line of canals west of Dunkirk. After a breathtakingly rapid advance, *General* Heinz Guderian, commanding XIX. *Panzerkorps* and *General* Georg-Hans Reinhardt commanding XLI. *Panzerkorps* had forced bridgeheads over the Aa Canal and were about to press on towards the small port in which the tattered remains of the BEF was now gathering ready for its full-scale evacuation to England. But then, at 12.30 hours, came an order from the *Führer's* headquarters – the armour was to halt.



ABOVE: There were several mishaps sustained by the young, inexperienced pilots of III./JG 52 following their formation in March 1940. This Bf 109 E, coded 'Yellow 10' of 8./JG 52 made a belly landing at Straussberg during March or early April 1940. This is another instance where light mottle had been introduced to the fuselage sides.

The reasons for this surprising order have often been debated by military historians, but certain facts are clear. For three days, Hitler had feared that the armoured spearhead of Army Group A had advanced too fast for an effective flank defence to be established. It was 'tactically foolhardy' to commit tanks in the swampy Flanders lowlands when he now had other priorities. Furthermore, he was haunted by the vision of his armour being shot to pieces in the streets of Dunkirk.

But when Göring stepped in and pronounced that the Luftwaffe was perfectly capable of annihilating the encircled British forces alone and without the need for armour, Hitler had the final justification he needed to 'save' his tanks. The *Luftwaffe* was to finish the job at Dunkirk.

However, Göring's optimism was countered to some extent by Kesselring's pessimism over the matter. Kesselring warned that some *Gruppen* were down to fifteen serviceable aircraft and that many bomber units were still based hundreds of kilometres away on German airfields.

Notwithstanding this, German fighters were rushed ever closer to the battle area. The Bf 109s of I./JG 27 were moved into St. Omer which had only just been evacuated by the RAF. As the *Stab* flight, led by *Oberstleutnant* Max Ibel, came into land, shells were still bursting around the airfield from both German and Allied guns. With only a few drops of fuel in their tanks, the Messerschmitts managed to reach St. Pol to the south but, once refuelled, quickly went into action escorting bombers attacking Dunkirk.

For the next two days, the *Luftwaffe* launched a series of heavy attacks on the town, wrecking the inner harbour facilities and forcing the British to utilise the outer harbour areas and the outlying beaches. The first day saw 10 per cent of bomber strength lost for 320 tons of bombs dropped, resulting in demands for an increase in fighter escort.

Not only burdened with the duty of protecting the bombers, for the first time *Luftwaffe* fighter pilots were pitted against an enemy fighter capable of meeting the Bf 109 E on equal terms – the magnificent Supermarine Spitfire. From dawn each day, Air Vice-Marshal Sir Keith Park, commander of the RAF's 11 Group, sent alternate squadron-strength waves of Spitfires and Hurricanes across the Channel, occasionally supplemented by Defiants and Blenheims, to patrol the French coast, usually at 50 minute intervals in an attempt to break up German attacks before they reached the beaches.

The German pilots found that their own aircraft could be out-turned and out-climbed, and, for the first time, the Bf 109 E was forced to fly to the limits of its performance. On 26 May, the three composite *Gruppen* of JG 27 escorted the dive bombers of St.G 77 and clashed with RAF Spitfires over the beaches. Two days later, I./JG 26 encountered Hornchurch-based Spitfires over the Channel east of the port. Despite claims for six shot down, only two Spitfires were reported lost by 616 Squadron, the only unit to lose aircraft that day. However, several future German *experte* were carving their reputations over Dunkirk, including Joachim Müncheberg, the *Gruppenadjutant* of III./JG 26, as well as Josef Priller and Walter Oesau, both of JG 51.

BELOW: General Erhard Milch, (left) and General Bruno Loerzer visit Oberstleutnant Harry von Bülow-Bothkamp (facing the camera) at Bastogne Bizory around 17 May 1940, after he had transferred from II./JG 77. Although Harry von Bülow-Bothkamp had been appointed Kommodore of JG 2 in April 1940, he did not take over command of the unit until the beginning of the campaign against France. He was awarded the Ritterkreuz on 22 August 1940 in recognition of his leadership qualities in Norway, France and the early days of the Battle of Britain. He claimed six victories during the First World War, but failed to add to his score during the Second. His Bf 109 E can be seen in the background of this photo.

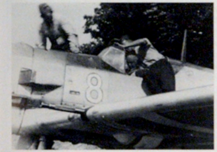
The problem for the RAF was that operating at extreme range, each squadron had only around 15 minutes combat flying time before being required to head home. The result was that the decimated troops of the BEF endured carnage. Luftwaffe fighters were to be seen sweeping through the smoke-filled sky, over the beaches and the filthy, oil-filmed water at 90 metres (300 feet), strafing columns of weary soldiers trying to reach the evacuation boats. Most found it a grim task.

ABOVE: A typical scene on the beaches at Dunkirk following the British evacuation and showing some of the vast amounts of equipement that had been left behind.

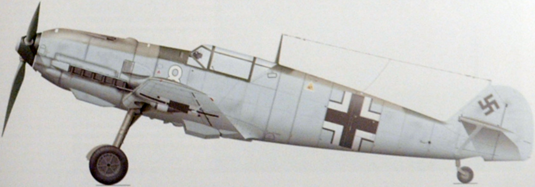
On 27 May, the *Luftwaffe* lost 24 out of 225 bombers dispatched, II. *Fliegerkorps* recording that it had lost more aircraft on this day than the previous ten. Subsequent losses were not so heavy, but bad weather during the following three days further reduced operations. Soon afterwards, KG 26 and KGr 100 were transferred to Norway in support of the German action around Narvik which meant that further action against Dunkirk could only be flown during daylight hours.

On 1 June – a clear and fine day – the *Luftwaffe* committed itself to an all-out effort over the beaches. At 06.30 hours, I./JG 26 intercepted Spitfires of 19, 222 and 616 Squadrons. Two British fighters were claimed shot down, but *Lt.* Siegfried Gruel was lost. Elsewhere, JG 27 and JG 51 tangled with British fighters.

The evacuation continued; by 27 May, only 7,669 troops had escaped, but the following day, aided by an armada of small boats, the figure reached 17,804. On 29 May, 47,310 left the beaches safely, and on 31st, another 68,014. At dawn on 4 June, the last ship left, carrying some 30,000 French troops. Altogether, 337,000 men had been evacuated, leaving the debris-littered beaches to curious and amazed German infantrymen. At midnight, Hitler ordered that bells throughout the *Reich* should be tolled for three days to signal the victorious end of what he deemed to be "the greatest battle in world history".



LEFT: 7/JG 54 was formed in February 1940. This photo shows one of its Bf 109 E-3s during the French campaign in May and June 1940. This aircraft was coded 'White 8,' outlined in black, which was painted rather crudely just forward of the cockpit. Note the positioning and marking of the 20 mm MG FF cannon in the wing. It is thought that the patch behind the cannon was painted black.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of 7./JG 54 at Böblingen, May 1940

Carrying the standard fighter camouflage of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The aircraft of this Staffel carried their white identification number painted just forward of the cockpit.

JUNE 1940

'Fall Rot'

On 28 May Belgium surrendered, followed swiftly by the entrapment and evacuation of British and French forces at Dunkirk and then, free of its commitment in the north, the *Luftwaffe* turned its attentions towards supporting the *Wehrmacht's* drive on Paris. Eight days earlier, on 20 May 1940, the German High Command had put forward a plan for the final offensive against France, code-named *'Unternehmen Rot'* (Operation Red). It would be in two phases. Army Group B under *General* von Bock would advance to the Seine, whilst *Panzergruppe Kleist* (on Bock's left flank) would isolate Paris. Rundstedt's Army Group A was to follow four days later, striking southwards from the Aisne towards Rheims. At the head of this attack, *Panzergruppe Guderian* would smash through the French centre, then outflank the right.

The initial German air objective was the neutralisation of French fighter airfields and installations as well as aircraft factories and transportation targets around Paris ahead of the main ground thrust against the 46 French divisions holding the Weygand line. Furthermore, OKW ordered that the *Luftwaffe* was "... to give direct support to the attack... breaking up any reinforcements (and) to hamper the regrouping of enemy forces..."

ABOVE: Hptm. Werner Mölders wearing his newly awarded Ritterkreuz on 29 May 1940, before he was shot down on 5 June near Senlis by Lieutenant Renè Pomier-Layrargues of GC.II/7. He became a POW. At the time he had 25 aerial victories.

So confident was the *Luftwaffe* that it transferred some of its fighter units back to the defence of Germany at this time. The *Stabsschwarm* and I./JG 77 plus III./JG 52 were to cover the vital synthetic oil plant at Leuna, while II.(J)/Tr.Gr.186 returned to Norway and I.(J)/LG 2 moved back to the German Bight.

Opposing the *Luftwaffe* were the recently reinforced *Armée de l'Air* units of General d'Astier de la Vigerie's *Zone d'Opérations Aériennes Nord* (ZOAN) which was able to muster some 125 bombers and approximately 225 fighters, composed mainly of Bloch 152s, MS 406s and the new, fast and highly manoeuvrable Dewoitine D.520.

During the first three days of June, the *Luftwaffe* attacked some 30 airfields, 60 rail targets and 50 other targets including ports, but the main effort was to be expended in two co-ordinated attacks. The first, by *Luftflotte* 3, was to be carried out in the Rhône valley and around Marseilles with the idea of preventing the French from bringing seasoned troops from North Africa. The second attack, code-named *'Unternehmen Paula'*, was intended to finally neutralise the French Air Force. Despite suffering the loss of 787 aircraft, French front line strength had actually risen, but serviceability rates were very poor.

Operation *Paula* commenced on the early afternoon of 3 June, when more than 300 bombers drawn from KG 1, KG 2, KG 3, KG 4, KG 30, KG 54, KG 76 and LG 1 formed a three-wave force assigned to attack no fewer than 50 targets. They were assigned a large escort of Bf 109s and Bf 110s, the former including elements of I./JG 1, I.(J)/LG 2, JG 3, JG 26, JG 27, JG 53, JG 54 and JG 77 operating under the control of the VIII. *Fliegerkorps* and *Jafü* 3 (*Oberst* Gerd von Massow). The fighters task was to clear the airspace ahead of the bombers.

In oppressive, hazy weather conditions, I./JG 3, operating under *Stab* JG 77, attacked the airfield at Meaux which was the target for the Do 17s of KG 76, but the only successful pilot was *Hptm.* Günther Lützow who shot down a Curtiss P-36. Meaux was also the destination for I./JG 53 which encountered French fighters over the target. *Hptm.* Werner Mölders of III./JG 53 claimed a Spitfire, his 23rd victory. I./JG 27 encountered heavy French anti-aircraft fire east of Compiègne. The 24 Bf 109s of II./JG 27 clashed with MS.406s over their target airfield, claiming just one enemy aircraft shot down. JG 26 fared little better, the 4. *Staffel* claiming three French fighters.

Though the operation saw intensive flying on the part of the *Jagdgruppen* – JG 27 flew 265 sorties over 17 missions – overall achievement for the first day was not entirely satisfactory, with just 16 French fighters destroyed on the ground and another 17 in the air for the loss of 26 German aircraft. Furthermore, none of the factories targeted were out of action for longer than 24 hours.

BELOW: German army troops march past the wreckage of a bombed French supply column. The outdated horse-drawn equipment was no match for the Luftwaffe's Bf 109s which constantly strafed and harassed French troops.

On 5 June *Hptm.* Werner Mölders, the *Kommandeur* of III./JG 53, was shot down and taken prisoner near Senlis and was escorted through Verneuil before being taken to Chantilly by truck. On 29 May, Mölders had become the first fighter pilot to be awarded Germany's highest decoration, the *Ritterkreuz*, for having achieved 25 victories. He was replaced as commander of III./JG 53 by another veteran of the Spanish Civil War, *Hptm.* Harro Harder. On 6 June, *'Unternehmen Rot'* was launched, German air forces quickly establishing air superiority. Thirty-seven aircraft were lost however, including two Bf 109s from I./JG 1, one from JG 2, two from III./JG 3, one from JG 26, five from JG 27, and one from I./JG 51.

ABOVE: A group of Luftwaffe pilots from I./JG 3 celebrate the French capitulation in June 1940, by going sight-seeing in Paris. First left is Ofw. Robert Olejnik of 2./JG 3 who was later awarded the Ritterkreuz and flew the Me 163 rocket fighter. He did not, however, claim any victories during the French campaign. On the middle-left in the distance through the mist the Eiffel Tower is just visible.

The last major French success in the air was the reply to the German Operation *Tapir* when the *Luftwaffe* lost some 30 aircraft in attacks on Paris on 5 June, with losses to the French of 24 fighters. The chief reason for French aircraft losses in the campaign was their use against well-defended German ground targets, 28 per cent of losses accountable in this way. For example, GC I/6 and II/2 were badly mauled while carrying out ground-attack missions.

Ten Bf 109s were lost on 6 June, but several German pilots gained victories including *Lt.* Gustav Sprick of 8./JG 26 who shot down three Bloch 152s. On the same day, *Hptm.* Adolf Galland, arriving from JG 27 took over III./JG 26 from *Major* Ernst von Berg and thus beginning what would be an illustrious career with that *Geschwader*. One of the *Jagdwaffe's* most successful operations came on 9 June when this unit, escorting a Do 17 reconnaissance aircraft near Vernon, shot down six from a formation of 17 Caudron C 714C-1 fighters. These aircraft, manned by the Polish unit GC I/145, were claimed as MS 406s by the Germans.

As *'Rot'* continued however, so the *Luftwaffe* established air supremacy and up to 9 June, a total of 19 airfields were attacked, with 87 aircraft destroyed on the ground. From now on, German losses began to steadily decline. The fact was that French air power was inadequate and – in terms of fighters at least – technically inferior, in the face of such overwhelming German resources and experience.

The same day, von Rundstedt's *Heeresgruppe* A launched a crushing attack against the French Fourth Army holding the Aisne between Neufchâtel and Attigny. The attack was supported by the bombers of the II.*Fliegerkorps* escorted by the Bf 109s of JG 53 and the Bf 110s of ZG 2. Seven French infantry divisions were attacked by twice their number of German units, but despite this the French fought bravely. Eventually, however, the Germans crossed the Aisne, reaching the Marne and then the town of Romilly.

By 06.30 hours on 14 June, German military vehicles had reached the Place de la Concorde in Paris. But, by then, two million Parisians had already fled the French capital and a little later a giant *swastika* flag was hung from the *Arc de Triomphe*.

On 21 June, with an aerial escort provided by II./JG 26, Hitler and Göring presented France with armistice terms in the same railway carriage which the Allies had used in November 1918 at Compiègnes. The peace terms were finally signed on 25 June, the last victory claimed by a Bf 109 being a Potez 63-II of *Groupe de Reconnaissance* II/14 based at Montélimar shot down on that day.

Between 3 September 1939 and 25 June 1940, the French Air Forces and anti-aircraft units claimed the destruction of 1,009 German and Italian aircraft during 20,410 sorties. The Air Force itself claimed 935 confirmed kills including 355 Bf 109s and Bf 110s, 461 bombers and dive bombers and 98 reconnaissance aircraft. German records indicate the loss of 1,469 aircraft in the same period including those lost to the RAF, the Belgian and Dutch air force (respectively and approximatively 20 and 60 kills).

RIGHT: On 17 June 1940 Marshal Philippe Pétain made representations calling for an Armistice. Out of revenge for where the German Empire had been forced to capitulate to France and her allies on 11 November 1918, Hitler insisted that site be the same clearing in the Compiégne Forest and in the same old 'wagon-lit' railway carriage used by Marshal Foch for the signing of the 1918 Armistice. German Army engineers had to tear down a wall in the museum in order to remove the carriage. On 21 June 1940 at 3:15 P.M. precisely Hitler arrived in his Mercedes and was accompanied by Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, Feldmarschall Walther von Brauchitsch, Feldmarschall Wilhelm Keitel, Grandadmiral Erich Raeder, German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy, all in dress uniforms. The French delegation was headed by Gènèral Charles Huntziger, commander of the Second French Army at Sedan, plus an Admiral, an Air Force General and Leon Noël, the former ambassador to Poland. In the photo from the left can be seen, Adolf Hitler seated, Keitel reading the preamble to the armistice terms, von Ribbentrop standing in the centre foreground, Rudolf Hess seated and French Gènèral Huntziger seated to the left.

"I was going to try for a landing in the corn…"

UFFZ. FRANZ JAENISCH

In May 1940, I was an *Oberfeldwebel* with 3./JG 2. Our *Staffel* was based near Rouen and I received orders to conduct a mission involving four aircraft with the objective of landing at Beaumont to establish our new airfield there. As we approached the designated landing area, I noticed that there was nothing to be seen except a huge field of grain. So I called to Helmut Wick, who was leading the other *Rotte* to tell him that I was going to try for a landing in the corn - which later turned out to be over a metre high - and that he should keep a lookout in case of any danger. This was the first landing at Beaumont-le-Roger. Wick circled overhead and I touched down safely, at which point a German truck pulled up. The other aircraft landed in my tracks and although the follow-up party lost its way, by that evening, an area of corn had been flattened to become the beginnings of our base where JG 2 subsequently remained for so long.

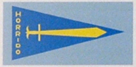
The site was a perfect example of the sort of base our fighter units looked for; an open landing area with a fringe of woodland and, in this case, a small town and railway nearby, plus a couple of elegant *châteaux* to provide accommodation - one among the trees, the other down the hill in the town. There were also the usual individual aircraft shelters which were made to resemble small farm buildings.

The Château de Beaumont-le-Roger which became the HQ of JG 2. It was totally destroyed by US bombers later in the war when they bombed the airfield situated to the north of the Château.

Once, following a mission over France, we had orders to land at Le Havre-Octeville. My section of Bf 109s duly complied. I conducted a 'reconnaissance' by making a few low-level passes over the town, the harbour and finally over the airfield, but neither friend or foe or any advance units were to be seen. I ordered the others to stay 'upstairs' with their fingers close to their firing buttons, while I proceeded to land on the airfield and taxied around, ready at a moment's notice for a sudden take-off.

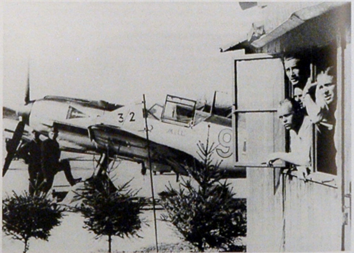
As I taxied onto the nearby perimeter road, an extremely excited *Wehrmacht* lieutenant roared up on a motorcycle. He pulled up his goggles and shouted: "*Where have you come from?*" I shouted back: "*What took you so long?*"

At Le Havre, we were way ahead of the infantry - landing before they had even reached the area. That evening, however, our advance unit finally reached us and we prepared to settle down.



3./JG 2 badge

RIGHT: Although the original photograph is captioned as being taken at Christmas 1939 the absence of snow, which had fallen at that time and the fact that the pilots are in their shirt sleeves, would indicate that it was probably taken later possibly in May or June 1940. Looking through the open window are Fw. Moller top, Lt. Rudi Pflanz, far right and Uffz. Franz Jaenisch, lower left, all belonging to 3./JG 2. The hut was called 'Café Aichamkauft' where the pilot's spent their free time. The Bf 109 E-1, caries the code 'Yellow 9' outlined in black and has the standard factory splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The spinner has a yellow tip with the 3./JG 2 badge on the nose. The 'Richthofen Geschwader' script 'R' is painted in the usual position just forward of the cockpit. Under the open cockpit is the name 'Molli' possibly in red or yellow which may be the nickname of Fw. Moller.



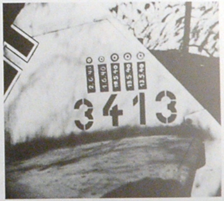
Jagdwaffe Order of Battle for 'Fall Rot'

5 June 1940

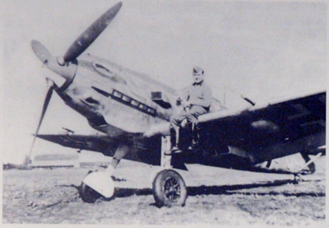
Luftflotte 2	***General der Flieger* Albert Kesselring**	
Jagdfliegerführer 2		***Oberst* Kurt von Döring**
Stab JG 26	Bf 109 E	*Major* Hans-Hugo Witt
II./JG 26	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Karl Ebbighausen
III./JG 26	Bf 109 E	*Major* Ernst von Berg (replaced by *Hptm.* Adolf Galland on this day)
I./JG 3	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Günther Lützow
III./JG 3	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Walter Kienitz
Stab JG 51	Bf 109 E	*Oberst* Theo Osterkamp
I./JG 51	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Hans-Heinrich Brustellin
I./JG 26	Bf 109 E	*Major* Gotthard Handrick
I./JG 20	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Hannes Trautloft
II./JG 27	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Werner Andres
Luftflotte 3	***General der Flieger* Hugo Sperrle**	
VIII *Fliegerkorps*		***Generalmajor* Wolfram von Richthofen**
Stab JG 2	Bf 109 E	*Obstlt.* Harry von Bülow
I./JG 2	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Hennig Strümpell
III./JG 2	Bf 109 E	*Major* Erich Mix
I./JG 76	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Alexander Winterer
Stab JG 27	Bf 109 E	*Obstlt.* Max Ibel
I./JG 27	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Helmut Riegel
I./JG 21	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Fritz Ultsch
I./JG 1	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Joachim Schlichting

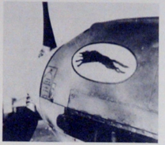
Jagdfliegerführer 3		***Oberst* Gerd von Massow**
Stab JG 52	Bf 109 E	*Major* Herbertus von Bernegg
I./JG 52	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Wolfgang Ewald
II./JG 52	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Hans-Günter von Kornatzki
Stab JG 53	Bf 109 E	*Obstlt.* Hans-Jürgen von Cramon-Taubadel
I./JG 53	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Lothar von Janson
II./JG 53	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Hans-Günther von Maltzahn
III./JG 53	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Werner Mölders (taken prisoner on 5 June and replaced by *Hptm.* Harro Harder. After Mölders was released he again took over command of JG 51).
Stab JG 54	Bf 109 E	*Major* Martin Mettig
I./JG 54	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Hubertus von Bonin
II./JG 3	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Erich von Selle
II./JG 51	Bf 109 E	*Hptm.* Günther Matthes

LEFT: Hptm. Hubertus von Bonin (with the glasses) talks to his Wart (mechanic) in front of his Bf 109 E. Von Bonin took over I./JG 54 on 1 January 1940. He had four victories in Spain and took the 'Mickey Mouse' insignia of 3./J88 (which he had led) as his personal emblem. He scored his first victory of the Second World War on 11 May. The Bf 109 has had extensive mottling applied to the fuselage sides.



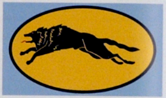
RIGHT: This close-up of the fin of Lt. Hans Krug's Bf 109 E-3, W.Nr.3413, from 5./JG 26, shows five victory bars with the date on which they were scored with British and French roundels above. The victory on 13 May was a Sptifire and the claim for 19 May was not confirmed.



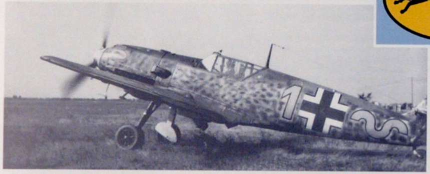


ABOVE: Close-up of the black running wolf emblem of III./JG 52 painted on the nose of one of the unit's Bf 109 Es. The emblem was probably introduced by the unit's first Gruppenkommandeur, Hptm. Wolf-Heinrich von Houwald after his first name 'Wolf'.

ABOVE: A pilot of III./JG 52 perches on the wing of his Bf 109 E holding his pet dog. The emblem painted on the nose is a black running wolf on a yellow oval shield. Note the third Gruppe wavy line marking and the spinner halved in black-green and white. On 6 April, III./JG 52 moved from Straussberg to Mannheim/Sandhofen.



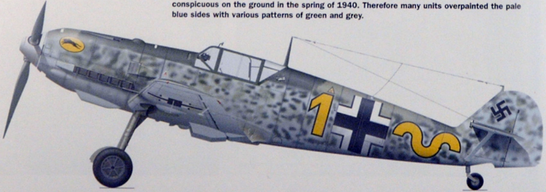
III./JG 52



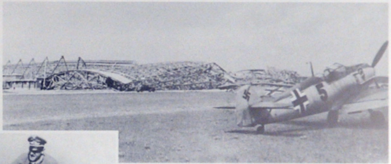
LEFT: This Bf 109 E-4 of 9./JG 52, coded 'Yellow 1' begins its take-off run. The aircraft carries the 'black wolf' emblem of III./JG 52 on a yellow oval shield on the nose.

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of 9./JG 52, France, June 1940

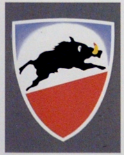
Although German fighters had switched to a camouflage pattern with light blue fuselage sides during the winter of 1939-40, operations during the 'Sitzkrieg' were to show that this was too conspicuous on the ground in the spring of 1940. Therefore many units overpainted the pale blue sides with various patterns of green and grey.



ABOVE: Several Bf 109 Es of 3./JG 52 with 'Yellow 12' in the centre probably photographed during May 1940 on a campaign airfield. The aircraft carry the running boar emblem of I./JG 52 on the engine cowling.



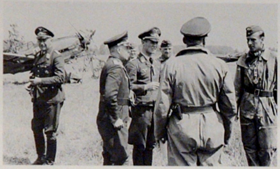
ABOVE: Photographed at Speyer just before the invasion of France and the Low Countries on 10 May 1940, this Bf 109 E of 2./JG 52, carried the number 'Red 5'. The running boar badge had continued to be used by I./JG 52 from the previous year. The painting of the Hakenkreuz (or Swastika) across the fin and rudder of the aircraft was quite unusual for Bf 109s of the period.



Variant of I./JG 52 running boar badge depicted right

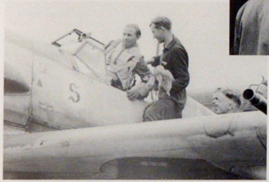
ABOVE: A pilot and ground crew inspect battle damage to the front part of the engine cowling of this Bf 109 E-3. The running boar badge was painted on a sky blue background (deepening to darker blue) with a red ground base.

RIGHT: A pilot sitting on the wheel of his Bf 109 E-1 in the autumn of 1939 which clearly shows the 'running boar' badge of I./JG 52. It is interesting to compare the variations of this badge as depicted on the Bf 109 Es above.



LEFT: On the 24 May 1940, pilots of JG 26 were awarded the EK II (Iron Cross Second Class). Here pilots are talking to senior officers after the ceremony. Seen from the left are Hptm. Dr. Erdtmann, Major Hugo Witt, Kommodore of JG 26, Hptm. Fromme, Oblt. Karl Ebbighausen with decoration (killed in action on 16 August 1940), Insp. Colbenbach, Oblt. Alfred Pomaska (killed in action on 1 June 1940), with his back to the camera and Lt. Otto-Heinrich Hilleke (killed in action on 26 June 1940). A partially camouflaged Bf 109 E-3 can be seen in the background.

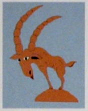
BELOW: Uffz. Ernst Nischik from 6./JG 26 has just landed his Bf 109 E-3 on 1 June 1940 and is congratulated on his first victory by the ground crew. His aircraft carried the JG 26 'Schlageter' badge. It appears that his aircraft was converted from an E-1 variant to carry the MG FFs in the wings. Note the cover patch where the hole for the MG 17 used to be and the barrel of the MG FF to the right on the leading edge.



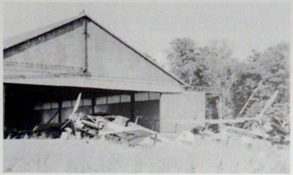
ABOVE: Uffz. Nischik is surrounded by ground crew as he describes in graphic detail the events leading to his first aerial victory, although it appears that this was never confirmed.

BELOW: After listening to his story, Uffz. Nischik is hoisted on the shoulders of the ground crew and carried off to a celebration.

ABOVE: Ernst Nischik enjoys a celebratory drink of 'Schnaps' after the events of his first victory

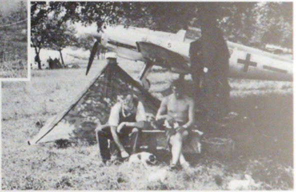


6./JG 26 'Steinbock' (Ram) badge

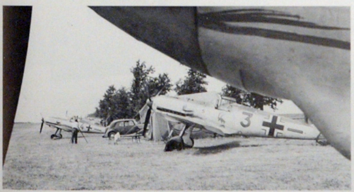


LEFT: These Bf 109 E-3s of 6./JG 26 are parked in the long grass in front of the hangars of the Morane Aircraft Works at Villacoublay on 20 June 1940.

BELOW: This Bf 109 E-3 from 6./JG 26 coded 'Brown 7' and horizontal Gruppe bar outlined in black still has the old style Balkenkreuz on the fuselage. These two groundcrew appear to be enjoying the fine sunshine and playing with some new found friends. Note the pyramid tents which were in common usage by German troops and could be joined together to make a bigger structure if required.



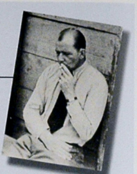
ABOVE: Two ground crew members have made their tent into a 'home from home' by adding some furniture and a small makeshift extension. As the battle of France drew to an end the pilots and crews were allowed a short respite before the next phase of operations, the *'Kanalkampf'*.



LEFT: Bf 109 E-3s including 'Brown 3 and 4' (outlined in black) of 6./JG 26 stand ready for action on a makeshift airfield in France during late June 1940. The aircraft carry the JG 26 'Schlageter' emblem as well as the 6./JG 26 'Steinbock' badge and look to have received only very slight staining around the engine exhausts. It would appear that the spinners may also be painted brown (RLM 26). The groundcrews have established themselves under canvas knowing that the fighting is almost over and it appears that some transport has been acquired ready for some anticipated leave.

"I recognised the RAF roundels and flew a textbook approach"

HANNS TRÜBENBACH



Hanns Trübenbach was was appointed Kommodore of JG 52 in 1940. He was wounded over London in October of that year, but survived the war.

"My unit, I.(J)/LG 2, was involved in the campaign against Poland where it claimed seven victories, two of them by pilots from my old aerobatic team, *Lt.* Hans-Wedige von Weiher and *Fw.* Erwin Clausen. We suffered no losses. My *Adjutant* at that time was *Lt.* Friedrich-Wilhelm Strakeljahn, who was later awarded the *Ritterkreuz*.

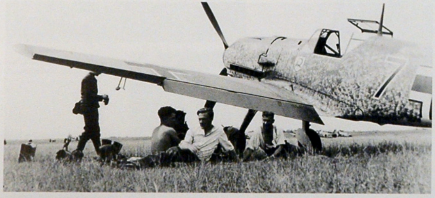
After the campaign we were sent to north Germany to protect the German Bight. Our commander was *Oberstleutnant* Schumacher, in charge of the fighter units involved in the defence of an area which was very important because of its naval bases. We did not become involved in 'Operation *Weserübung*' against Norway and, on 10 May, our *Gruppe* was still stationed at Wyck auf Föhr in northern Germany. It was only after two days that we moved south to join the '*Westfeldzug*' against the western Allies, flying in the direction of north Holland. On 14 May we were sent to Essen-Mülheim from where we took part in the offensive over southern Belgium.

On 19 May we moved to the campaign airfield of St. Aubin, a very dusty location not far from Charleroi. Four days later, we were transferred to France, to Mont St. Ecouvez South. Another *Gruppe*, I./JG 3 under Günther Lützow, was based on the northern part of the airfield.

On 26 May 1940, I claimed a French Curtiss Hawk 75 and three days later I scored my second victory against a Morane 406. This belonged to a squadron that appeared to be training! I led my *Stab* into the attack from behind and hit one of them. It caught fire and crashed. (Note: During this fighting, at 20.15 hours, *Oblt.* Herbert Ihlefeld, later an important ace, also claimed a Morane 406 to open his tally).

On 8 June 1940, I was flying a mission at about 800 metres with *Oblt.* Ihlefeld on my starboard side when I was hit by French *Flak*. I received a direct hit in the right wing with its cannon. I climbed to 1,100 metres but, my engine had also been hit and the propeller stopped. I had to try to get down as soon as possible. I managed to find a field and made a belly landing. I was apprehensive because my aircraft was fitted with the still secret *Reflexvisier* (gunsight) and I was planning to try to hide it when I saw a German *Wehrmacht* vehicle coming in my direction. There was a *Major* from *Aufklärungsgruppe* 123 on board and I said to him "*If I am lucky, you'll be able to take me to my unit at Mont Ecouvez which is about thirty minutes from here.*"

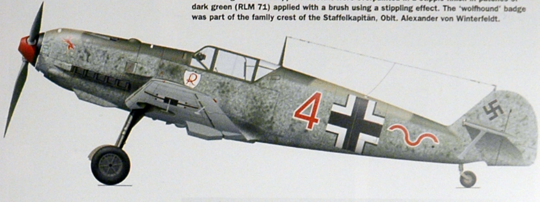
When I returned to base I had no aircraft and I had to ask my pilots if I could borrow one of theirs. This was not particularly popular because they all wanted to fight, but finally I got one from *Ofw.* Gödert. Two hours later, we received the next mission order: escort for bombers in the Le Hauze area. Having completed the mission, we were able to fly a '*freie Jagd*' on our return. It was then I sighted *Flak* clouds and ordered the port *Staffel* to see what was happening in that area. However, the radio reception was very bad and my pilots did not understand my orders and continued flying ahead. Therefore, I turned towards the *Flak* with my *Stabsschwarm* and sighted an English Fairey Battle. I fired a green flare in order to identify us as German and the *Flak* stopped firing. I recognised the RAF roundels and flew a textbook approach. I clearly saw the crew, pilot and observer who was taking photographs. They had not spotted me so I continued my approach. This happened very quickly because of the difference in speed between our aircraft. Despite this I had time to aim at the rudder and fire. The pilot reacted quickly but I followed him. The observer then responded by opening fire. I returned fire and, before my guns jammed, managed to severely damage the aircraft. It caught fire and crashed on the road to Reims."

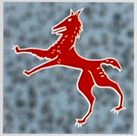


ABOVE: The ground crew of this Bf 109 E-1 coded 'Red 7' (outlined in white) of 8./JG 2 take a break from servicing their aircraft. The paintbrush stipple finish is very evident and, on this machine, the Balkenkreuz has not been modified. Note that the stipple has been taken down to include the wing root itself. The aircraft also carried the JG 2 Geschwader emblem as well as the 8. Staffel badge on the nose which was part of the family crest of the Staffelkapitän, Oblt. Alexander von Winterfeldt.

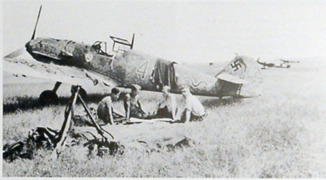
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 8./JG 2 flown by Uffz. Georg Hippel, June 1940

The fuselage sides of Hippel's aircraft were overpainted in a stipple finish in patches of dark green (RLM 71) applied with a brush using a stippling effect. The 'wolfhound' badge was part of the family crest of the Staffelkapitän, Oblt. Alexander von Winterfeldt.



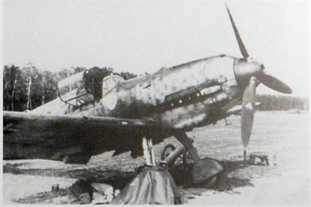


8./JG 2 emblem

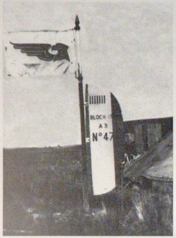


ABOVE: With the fuselage Balkenkreuz covered as camouflage from the air, the ground crew, with weapons to hand, take a break in front of Uffz. Georg Hippel's Bf 109 E-1 coded 'Red 4' outlined in white with the III. Gruppe wavy line in red after the fuselage cross. The brush stipple finish applied to the fuselage is very evident as is the JG 2 emblem and the 8. Staffel badge.

ABOVE: A close-up of the 8. Staffel badge, on the nose of a Bf 109 E.

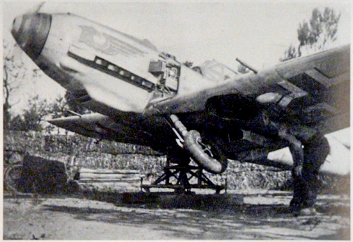


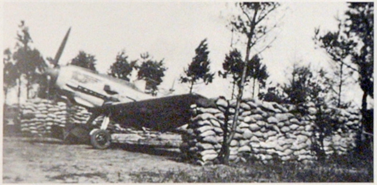
RIGHT: Another Bf 109 E-1 of 8./JG 2 in France. The rear ring of the spinner is painted black-green (RLM 70) with the remainder in red (RLM 23). This aircraft also has a rounded cockpit canopy and has had a mottling applied probably in black-green and dark green (RLM 71) rather than the brush stipple finish.



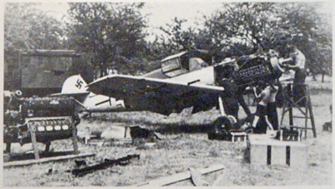
ABOVE: 6./JG 52's flag attached to the tail of a French Bloch 174 probably photographed in June 1940 on a French airfield. The victories claimed by the Staffel were painted on the top of the Bloch's tail.

BELOW: Undercarriage tests being carried out on a Bf 109 E-3 of 6./JG 52 at Nordholz. For these the aircraft was mounted on trestles and the engine run up in order to engage the undercarriage hydraulic system. Note the yellow tip to the spinner.

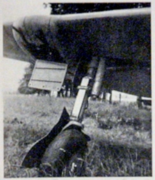




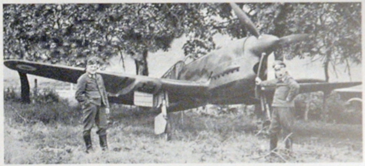
LEFT: A Bf 109 E-3 of 6./JG 52 photographed in a sandbagged revetment at Nordholz. On 27 June 1940, the second Gruppe of JG 52 moved from Luxemburg-Sandweiler to Nordholz where it remained until 6 August 1940. Note the red eagle Staffel emblem.

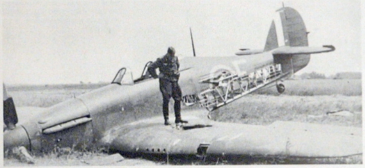


RIGHT: A Bf 109 E-3 possibly belonging to JG 27, on an airfield somewhere in France during June 1940, is undergoing extensive engine maintenance or even replacement. The aircraft has the standard splinter pattern of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath. The interesting feature is Gruppe symbol on the rear of the fuselage which does not conform to any recognised standard and the significance of which is not known.

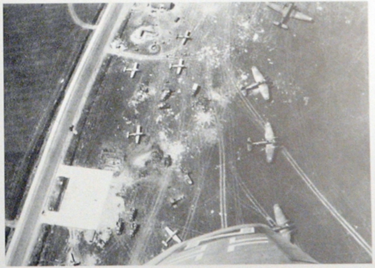


LEFT AND BELOW: Relatively few of these Caudron C.R. 714s were in service with the French Air Force and this one appears to have been captured intact. The interesting feature on this aircraft is that the wing guns have been housed in specially designed pod, just outside the inward retracting undercarriage. The pod allowed easy access to the guns and provided a larger ammunition storage facility.



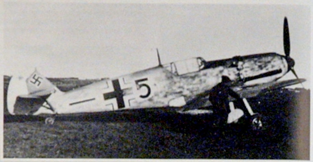


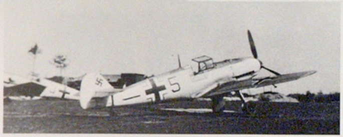
LEFT: The RAF lost many aircraft over France in their main attempt to keep the Luftwaffe away from the beaches over Dunkirk. These tactics proved expensive in men and machines but in the event gave the British Royal Navy more opportunity to save the soldiers trapped on the beaches. This Hawker Hurricane is being inspected by a Luftwaffe officer and shows considerable damage to the rear canvas covered fuselage.



RIGHT: As French airfields fell into German army hands, the Luftwaffe speedily occupied the area and took control of any available facilities. This view taken from a He 111 shows several destroyed French aircraft and minor bomb damage, with Bf 109 Es and He 111s as well as a Ju 52 transport already in occupation.

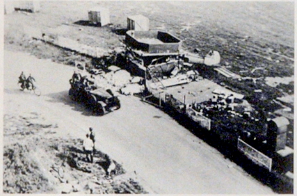
RIGHT: After the introduction of the predominantly light-blue (RLM 65) fuselage sides to Bf 109 E-1s, it was soon discovered that during the spring and the seasonal green appearance of the landscape that this colour was too conspicuous from the air. Therefore, the ground crews began to overpaint the light blue with various daubs of grey (RLM 02) or dark green (RLM 71) which was either sprayed on in a mottle finish or stippled on with a brush. This aircraft, 'Black 5', was operated by the fifth Staffel of an unidentified Jagdgeschwader and has had some mottling applied, carefully missing the markings and leaving the rudder in RLM 65. Note this aircraft carried three victory bars painted on the rudder.

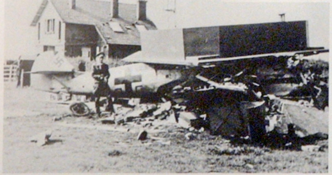




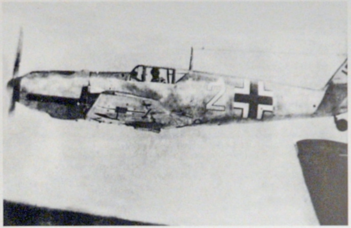
LEFT: This Bf 109 E-1 was probably coded 'Black 5' of the 5. Staffel of an unidentified Jagdgeschwader, photographed in France in June 1940. This aircraft and the one beyond still carry the standard finish of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath.

RIGHT: A German staff car passes the wreck of a Bf 109 E, belonging to Lt. Herbert Wasserzier after he had crashed into a pill-box on the airfield of Cap d'Alprech just south of Boulogne. He was captured and taken prisoner on 27 May after the crash. The aircraft was coded 'Black 9' which was painted on the engine cowling. The number applied in this position was used by I./JG 1 (later III./JG 27).

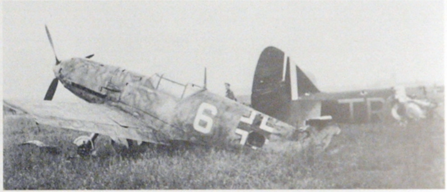




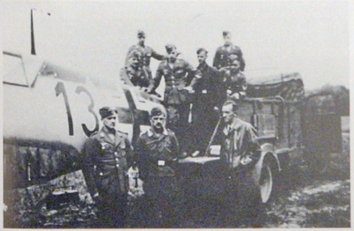
LEFT: Lt. Herbert Wasserzier of 2./JG 1 standing in front of his crashed Bf 109 E. Wasserzier was captured on 27 May 1940 after this incident on Cap d'Alprech airfield but as German troops overran the area a few days later, he was able to return to his unit on 7 June. There can be little doubt that he was very lucky to escape without serious injury from this crash and that the pill-box was not constructed as well as it might have been. The rudder of the aircraft was painted light blue (RLM 65) which, due to the reflection of light, gives the impression that it may have been painted white.



LEFT: Relatively few in-flight photographs of operational Bf 109 Es have been published. This aircraft, a Bf 109 E-3, was coded 'Yellow 2' and belonged to the third Staffel of an unidentified Luftwaffe fighter Gruppe. Again the fuselge sides have had some mottling applied to reduce the brightness of the light blue (RLM 65).



ABOVE: A common scene on French airfields at this time was the wreckage of both Allied and German aircraft pushed together. Here a severely damaged Bf 109 E coded 'Yellow 6' is photographed on a French airfield with the wreckage of a Bristol Blenheim of No.59 Squadron RAF in the background. The Messerschmitt's Staffel emblem, positioned below the cockpit, has been over-painted making it difficult to identify to which unit it belonged. Note that both the fuselage and the upper wing surfaces have been sprayed in a 'scribble' pattern of dark green (RLM 71) which is the earliest known photo of this being applied.



LEFT: Luftwaffe ground crews with the fuselage of a Bf 109 E, coded 'Red 13' outlined in white. Around this time, the second Staffel of Luftwaffe fighter units changed the colour of their identification numbers from red to black. The civilian in the picture may be the owner of the truck which the troops had commandeered for salvaging the machine.

"A nasty surprise...!"

Hans Schmoller-Haldy

"When I returned from Spain (see account in *Jagdwaffe* Section 2 '*The Spanish Civil War*') during the summer of 1939, I had no knowledge of the political situation in Germany and western Europe. Just after the big parade in Berlin, I took a three week holiday, flying to Africa in a Savoia airliner of Al-Italia. This was done with the aid of the 7,000 RM earned from my service with the '*Legion Condor*'. In September 1939, I was appointed *Staffelkapitän* of 3./JG 54 which had just been formed near Nürnberg, the *Gruppe* using the coat of arms of the city as its emblem. My *Gruppenkommandeur* was *Hptm.* Hans-Jürgen von Cramon Taubadel. At first my *Staffel* had no Bf 109s but flew Avia B-534s, a Czech aircraft captured a few months before. We were able to replace these by '109 *Emils*' after about three months.

Early in the autumn of 1939, our *Gruppe* moved for the first time, transferring to Böblingen near Stuttgart to patrol the border with France. In November, a dramatic event occurred which resulted in me being court martialled and sentenced to six months in jail. I had allowed one of my best pilots, *Uffz.* Dressel, to make an unofficial 'tour' with a *Hauptmann* of a ground unit from Böblingen in an Arado 66 biplane. Flying at 150 metre (500 feet), their aircraft had crashed, probably due to problems with the tail. Dressel was killed and the officer severely wounded. Because of the war situation, I was allowed to continue flying with my *Staffel*, but *Lt.* Josef Priller, who led another *Staffel* in the area, took over command. Being friendly with Priller, I was still able to lead my men and the situation was soon forgotten. At the end of the year, von Cramon Taubadel, now a Major, was replaced by my friend and former *Staffelkapitän* in Spain, *Hptm.* Hubertus von Bonin.

The unit continued to move, finally, early in 1940, being based at the airfield of Eutingen near Horb, south-west of Stuttgart.

On 10 May 1940, the first day of the offensive against the west, we flew five missions, mostly strafing airfields or escorting bombers but including support for our troops advancing on the ground. We also flew several '*freie Jagd*' sorties, encountering French fighters such as, for example, the Morane 406 and Dewoitine 520.

We took part, with others, in the two best known actions of the campaign: 'Operation *Paula*', escorting bombers attacking aircraft factories and airfields around Paris, and the fighting over Dunkirk from where the British Expeditionary Forces were attempting to evacuate back to England. This was the first time I encountered the famous Spitfire, a nasty surprise...! In total, I flew 59 missions over France during the campaign and claimed three French aircraft destroyed.

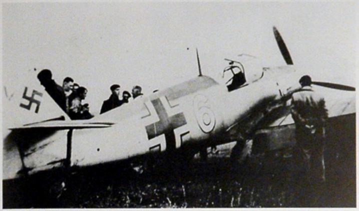
Before the Armistice was signed, on 21 June, we received a telegram at our operations room in Châteaudun ordering us to move as quick as possible to Holland to intercept British raids. We were happy to end the French campaign with only light losses. On the other hand, we were exhausted after more than a month of continuous fighting and upset that our hopes of being sent back to Germany for 'rest and recuperation' were dashed.

Therefore our complete *Geschwader* moved north. I landed at Eindhoven during the evening of 20 June while another part of my first *Gruppe* was based on the large airfield of Schipol near Amsterdam. The II. and III. *Gruppen* were sent nearer the coast.

On 26 June, I received an alert that a Bristol Blenheim had been reported flying over Rotterdam. I took off with a *Schwarm* and quickly found the British aircraft over Breda. Being higher, we turned and dived towards it. My speed increased so rapidly that I quickly found myself behind the enemy, just in the right position to be shot at by its rear gunner. I tried to escape, but it was too late. My aircraft was hit several times and I heard the metallic noise of the hits as well as my aircraft being shaken. Several seconds later, I regained my composure and began to feel a horrible pain in my left foot. I looked at it and discovered that the cockpit floor was red with my blood. I was shocked for a few moments but regained my wits and explained my state over the radio. I told them that I would try to return 'home' and land normally. I found the airfield but due to my loss of blood, I could no longer think straight. My landing was catastrophic. I hit the ground too hard and my '109 turned over. Fortunately, I did not suffer any new injuries and was rushed to hospital at Tilburg.

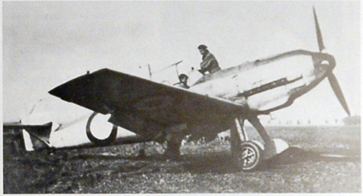
A month later, I rejoined my *Staffel* which had moved to Amsterdam. I had just a short stay there, then we were sent to the Pas-de-Calais for the next aerial campaign."

RIGHT: Two Bf 109 Es and the fuselage of another plus several other aircraft, including Ju 87s, photographed on a French airfield at the end of the campaign in the West. The Bf 109s, are coded 'Yellow 5' and 'Yellow 7' and have the Hakenkreuz positioned across the fin and rudder. Both aircraft have the standard finish of dark-green (RLM 71) and RLM grey (RLM 02) on the uppersurfaces with light-blue (RLM 65) on the fuselage sides and underneath.

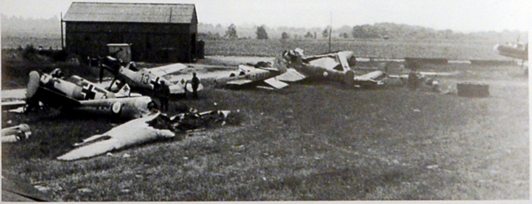


LEFT: On 30 May 1940, Uffz. Hager of 4./JG 54 (or 1./JG 76 at the time) in his Bf 109 E-1 W.Nr. 3247 coded 'White 6' (outlined in black), took off from Charleville for a test flight. He became disorientated south of Mézières and landed by mistake at Orconte on the Marne, near Vitry-le-François, where he was taken prisoner. The French quickly over-painted the Balkenkreuze and Hakenkreuze and applied French roundels and rudder stripes. Uffz. Hager was later able to return to his unit after the Armistice.

BELOW: Uffz. Hager's Bf 109 E after it had been re-painted but still carrying the II./JG 54 badge on the fuselage just forward of the cockpit. It was flown by the French test pilot Constantin Rozanoff. He was no stranger to the Messerschmitt fighter as he previously had the opportunity to fly the Bf 109 B-1, coded 6-15, captured in Spain during the Civil War and also the Bf 109 E that was later registered with the RAF as AE 479.



BELOW: Several Bf 109 Es and other aircraft lie on a French airfield 'scrap dump' at the end of the campaign in France. Several unit badges can be seen. The engine cowling on the the grass to the left carries the emblem of I./JG 27. The first Bf 109 from the left carries the 'Jesau Kreuz' of I./JG 1 and the aircraft coded '13' appears to carry the emblem of 2./JG 52 below the cockpit, despite this emblem usually appearing on the engine cowling. Also visible are a Klemm 35 coded WL+EAFP, as well as wrecks of French Potez 63.11s and a Do 17 P on the extreme right.



RIGHT: An Oberleutnant examining the wreckage of an RAF Hurricane which he had shot down somewhere in France. The pilot may have belonged to JG 51. RAF Fighter Command had put up as much resistance as possible against a superior force and although it had suffered heavily in the campaign it was due to their constant combat with the Luftwaffe that the British and other Allied soldiers were able to be evacuated from the beaches at Dunkirk.

ABOVE: Generalfeldmarschall Hermann Göring and Generaloberst Walther von Brauchitsch await the arrival of Adolf Hitler before the signing of the Armistice at Compiègne on 21 June 1940.

BELOW: Adolf Hitler stands triumphant in front of the Eiffel Tower which he had hoped to ascend. A very important part of the lift mechanism had mysteriously 'broken' and which equally mysteriously was not repaired until Paris had been liberated by the Allies in 1944. The next phase of the air war, The Kanalkampf, would not be quite as spectacular for Germany.

VOLUME ONE

LUFTWAFFE COLOURS

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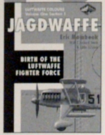

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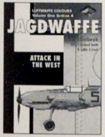

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